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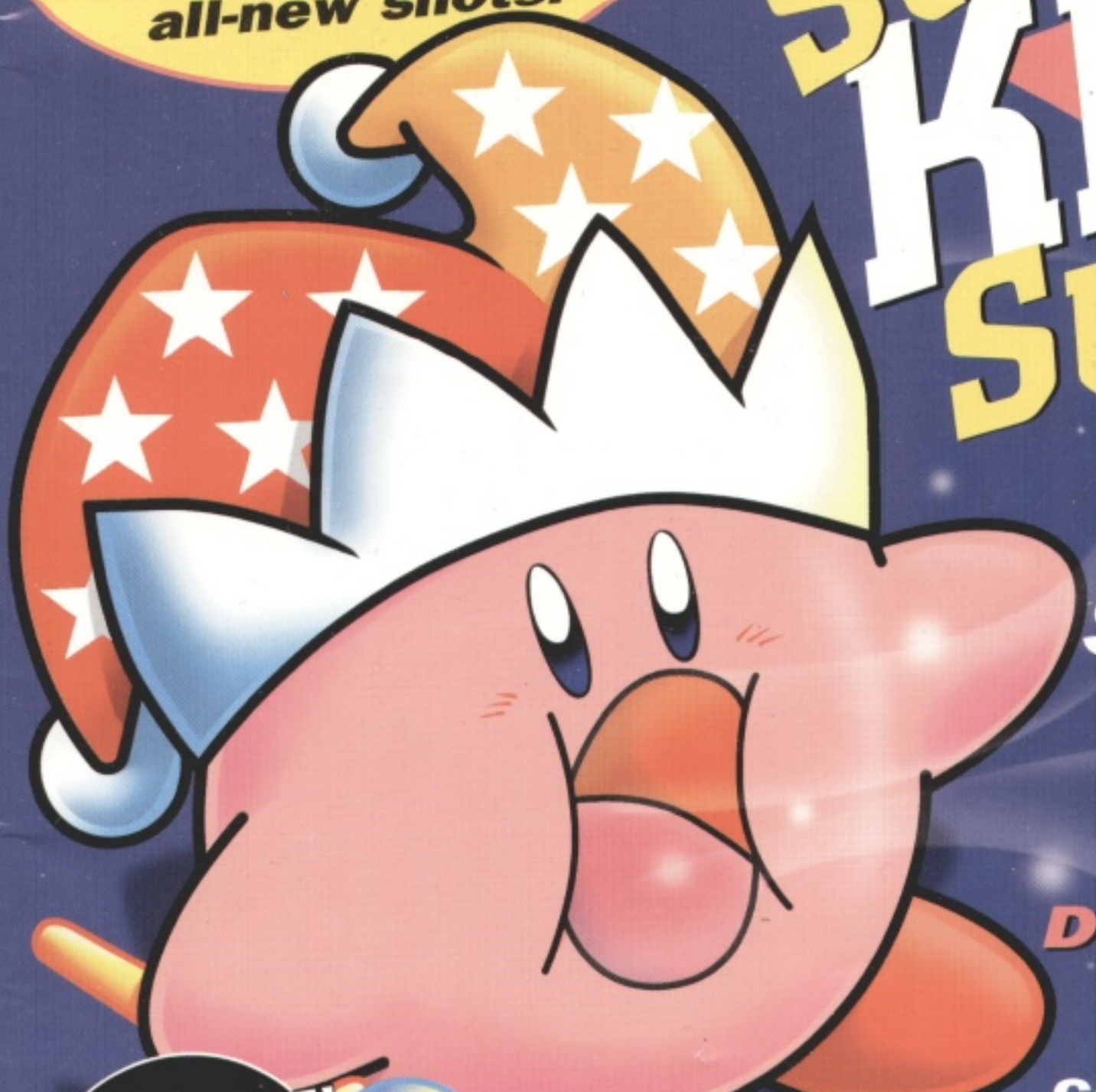
SUPER PLAY

ISSUE 44

JUNE 1996

NINTENDO 64
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter and Shadows Of The Empire – all-new shots!



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INDEPENDENT SNES AND NINTENDO ULTRA 64 MAGAZINE

SUPER PLAY

JUNE ISSUE 44

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Future PUBLISHING

THE SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

from the BIG CHAIR

Our full contents listing starts just over the page

What?!? *Mario RPG* and *Star Kirby Super Deluxe* – we truly are too good to you. This month we've tracked down these two top new Japanese releases just to showcase them exclusively to you fortunate lot. But, in the time-honoured tradition of the Big Chair, we can't offer much more than a teaser here, so... you'll have to lick the tip of your finger and flip on through to the relevant pages if you want to know more. And we know you do!

Want to build up your games collection with a selection of the best-priced SNES games in all the land? Well, we've done all the legwork for you and hunted down some of the toppest bargains imaginable. For full details of how to boost your games library on a budget, turn quickly to our Bargain Hunter feature on page 24 to discover where to shop to get the most for your cash ...

Tips fiends should be amply satisfied with this month's huge players' guide featuring *Diddy's Kong Quest*. Join us as we reveal all the secrets of this immensely popular and tip-toptabulous game. You won't find a playguide like this anywhere else!

Now, let me see, what's next? Ah yes, if you're interested in personal development, there's a glimpse into that little-mentioned topic – how SNES games can actually improve your quality of life. We gathered up a selection of *Super Play* no-hopers and, under strictly scientific conditions, analysed the effect on them after playing various titles, previously considered not in the least 'educational'. The results, as you will read, were startling...

And... Stop press... This just in... And other such journalistic means of attracting your attention... Much major scooping activity has been occurring over the last couple of days – you'll find six pages devoted to all things Nintendo 64, including some brand-new pics and info on *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, *Shadows of the Empire*, *War Gods* and a couple of other things which have recently been espied by the *Super Play* scoopmonger.

Along the way you'll find plenty more that we didn't have the space to mention here. So, until next month, enjoy the issue!

Alison Harper
Editor

INDEPENDENT SNES AND NINTENDO 64 MAGAZINE

SUPER PLAY CON

REGULARS

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WIN!

Your very own *Killer Instinct 2* coin-op in our biggest compo ever!

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N64 NEWS

The hottest Nintendo 64 news in the business! All-new pics and info on:

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter
Shadows Of The Empire
Super Mario 64
Pilotwings 64
and
War Gods

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Old fat head is back!

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Mazza as you've never seen him before... exclusively reviewed!

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Is it possible to actually learn life-enhancing skills from games? We find out...

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SUPER PLAYERS GUIDE

DIDDY'S KONG QUEST

Part one

The ONLY guide you'll ever need – with more secrets than any other mag!

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SUPER

PROFILES

To honour our sheer excitement over the following N64 stories we thought we'd treat you to our favourite facial expressions of the month. Erm, enjoy...

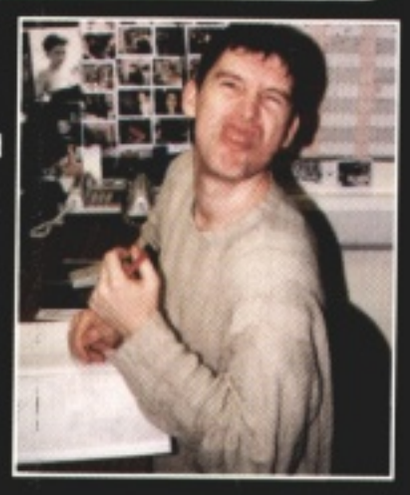
Alison Harper

Alison's world famous, 'slightly menacing with a hint of yellow and chip on shoulder' look. "At last solid N64 info is emerging!"

Ollie Alderton

Ollie enjoyed his 'slightly sulky while at the same time utterly startled sideways glance' far too often this issue. "Oh, what splendid graphics!"

Sean Atkins



Sean's 'oh I haven't got my specs on, who's that and do I look like a mole or what?' look emphasised his distrust of Nintendo's release dates.

Wil Overton

Wil's utter annoyance at not having even held the N64 control pad yet is taking its toll on his hairline which forced him to buy a new kitchen!

TUROK:

N64 NEWS

With the release date of the Nintendo 64 now certain (fingers crossed), third party developers are beginning to shake loose the shackles of Nintendo's non-disclosure agreement and unveil their Next Gen offspring. First out of the blocks are Acclaim...

In a shock move, Acclaim have made available limited footage and info on their upcoming N64 title, *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. The move is surprising because Nintendo were not planning to show any more N64 games until E3 (the Electronic Entertainment Expo). Still, who's complaining?

Based on the now extinct Acclaim comic of the same name, *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* follows the exploits of a Native American who has strangely found himself in a dinosaur-laden dimension called The Lost

EXPRESS

DINOSAUR HUNTER

UNVEILED

You are witnessing a rare thing. A videogame main character with a beard!

Valley. As if that wasn't inconvenient enough, a beast known as The Campaigner has also recently arrived, bringing with him, his most powerful creation, Chronoscepter – a device designed to master time travel. What The Campaigner doesn't know is that Chronosceptor will instead destroy the space/time continuum, i.e. everything. As Turok, your job is to stop him while also contending with numerous dinosaurs (including velociraptors), alien troops, bugs, seek-and-destroy robots and time itself.

The game is largely a first-person perspective affair, although whether you'll be able to toggle the perspective with the N64 controller's yellow 'arrow' buttons is still unclear. However, to merely compare it to *Doom* would be naive. The non-linear nature of the game coupled with the promised variety of settings and objectives would seem to place it nearer to *Hexen*. The worlds are all very flexible with truly random power-ups and location changes for the secret levels every time you play.

The sequence that we viewed contained a series of islands with fern trees and temples. The environment still looks a bit sparse at this stage, but the character animation certainly impresses – which is no surprise when you consider Acclaim's pedigree in motion-capture technology. One debatable element is the use of a fog effect in the distance. The effect is very pleasing and could well be there to add an exotic element of mystery and tension. Either that or the programmers are being lazy and bringing the visible horizon closer in order to save precious memory. It's difficult to say until we've played the game to within an inch of its life. Hmmm...

Is the fog in the distance really necessary on every level?

At present *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* is only 40% complete, but the development team at Acclaim are working frantically to ready a playable demo in time for E3 in Los Angeles on May 16th. We'll have a special report and exclusive preview in *Super Play* 46.

The man himself! Turok's his name, dinosaur hunting's his game.

Don't even ask! We haven't got a clue what these two are up to.

A truly 3D environment. Even though it's only 40% complete, this challenges current PlayStation titles.

Shadows Of

Apart from *Mario 64*, *Shadows Of The Empire* has to be *the* most eagerly awaited of all the N64 titles so far announced. As it approaches the 70% complete mark, we thought it was time for another look at LucasArts' most ambitious videogame to date.

Shadows Of The Empire takes place in the period between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*. The player is plunged into the sinister underworld that carries out the most evil of the Empire's operations in deepest secrecy, and must face a new power-hungry *Star Wars* enemy, the Dark Underlord Xizor (pronounced 'She-zor'), as well as old favourites Boba Fett, Jabba the Hutt and the Emperor himself. As for Darth Vader, LucasArts could neither confirm nor deny his inclusion in the game – we reckon he's in there somewhere.

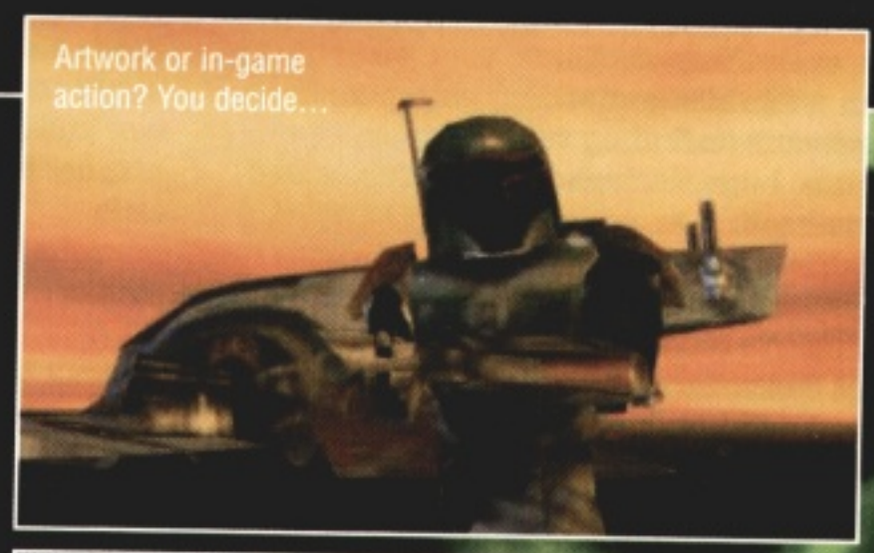
The game is split into 12 enormous levels and boasts five diverse modes of play. The snow-speeder level shown at Shoshinkai in November is now complete and not only contains absolute freedom of movement, but also boasts sound effects taken directly from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Other levels include first-person perspective action, which apparently make *Dark Forces* and *Doom* look sadly out of date, some frenzied space shoot-'em-up sequences (along the lines of Namco's coin-op, *Star Blade*) and a speeder-bike street chase using footage from the soon to be released movie, *Star Wars: Special Edition*.

The team involved in *Shadows*' production certainly appear to have put more effort into this game than any previous *Star Wars* creation. Jack Sorenso, LucasArts president explains, "The team that's building *Shadows Of The Empire* grew up loving *Star Wars* and playing Nintendo games, so it's perfect for them to

If it's anything like the film you'll have to lasso their legs to cripple these mighty walkers.

Our hero, Dash Render. That'll be you, that will.

One of the many plot-telling cut-away scenes.


Artwork or in-game action? You decide...

If this is set between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*, shouldn't he be frozen?

JUNE 1996 ISSUE 44

create the next chapter in both. In addition to the creativity, artistry and technical expertise of the team, they're attacking the project with the passion of intense fans."

Of course, the game wouldn't have been possible at all, and, certainly, crowd-pulling touches such as the footage from the upcoming *Special Edition* wouldn't have been included without the support of one man: "*Shadows Of The Empire* is an important addition to the *Star Wars* universe, and I'm glad LucasArts and Nintendo can bring this new story to a true interactive entertainment platform," explains film maker George Lucas. "It's exciting to have these adventures, which have become so much a part of our entertainment history, continuing to thrive in this evolving medium." What a top bloke.

Shadows Of The Empire will be released in North America simultaneously with the N64 (on September 30th) and will be previewed at E3 in Los Angeles on May 16th.

Expect a full preview in *Super Play* 46.

The view from inside the cockpit cuts down visibility, but aids navigation.

Boba Fett in all his texture-mapped glory. What a stunna!

The Empire nears completion

Nintendo of America are relying more on this than *Mario 64* to shift N64s in North America.

Let's see the PlayStation handle explosions that well while being that close!

Just four weeks before we get our hands on a 90% complete version.

The newest of foes, Dark Underlord Xizor (pronounced 'She-zor')

ADVENTURES IN MARKETING

The N64 version of this new adventure is the central element of a massive multi-media roll-out for the latest Star Wars episode. As well as the exclusive N64 game, there will be a simultaneous release of a novel by Bantam books, a series of comics from Dark Horse Comics, trading cards by Topps and additional spin-off merchandise from the likes of Kenner and Galoob.

Howard Roffman, LucasFilm's Vice President of Licensing explained the reasons for this multi-media synergy, "Since 1991, we have told new Star Wars stories in novels, comics and videogames and they have been extremely popular with the fans. It occurred to us that it would be even more interesting to unite all three of these media behind a single, milestone story. And that is how we came up with *Shadows*, the first new spin-off story that is set in the time of the original *Star Wars* trilogy."

Expect a rather large *Shadows Of The Empire* cottage industry.

© LucasArts © Bantam Books © Dark Horse Comics

N64 NEWS

SUPER All New

An early teaser pointing to a secret level?

Pixelation? Not on your nelly!

After extra tweakage time, which partly resulted in the delay of the N64, Shigeru Miyamoto and his team are so pleased with the progress of *Super Mario 64* that they've released the following stunning screen shots of what Hiroshi Yamauchi famously describes as, "the best videogame in history."

Since it was first shown in December, *Super Mario 64* now boasts new flying scenes, a ride on a rainbow, a visit to the pyramids, a *Terminator 2* style Mario, a previously inconceivable hall of mirrors, and, well, see for yourself....

At Shoshinkai, the game was shown on an 8 megabit ROM and stunned the world. Now, on the eve of the official unveiling ceremony at E3, it's ballooned to 64 megabits and is approximately 97% complete. That may sound odd in light of this very mag stating that at the time of Shoshinkai the game was 50% complete, but Miyamoto and his team had only mapped 20% of the game at that stage. Got that? Good.

The over-the-shoulder viewpoint looks like a winner.

So, can we finally compare the Nintendo 64 to its main rivals, the PlayStation and the Saturn, now that we've got some rival software? Well... yes, actually. *Super Mario* shifts 105,000 on-screen polygons per second, and we're not talking ordinary polygons – that's 105,000 texture-mapped polygons with scores of special effects applied. Without special effects, the N64 can shift something in the region of 600,000 texture-mapped polygons. Compare that to the PlayStation's 180,000 texture-mapped only polygons and the Saturn's 200,000. It can truly be said that the real next generation has arrived.

Yes, it's all very well to bombard you with techno jargon, but what does all this mean in real terms? Well, the April edition of *Popular Science* magazine (page 41 if you're interested) ran a story on the Nintendo 64. Until we give *Super Mario 64* the full preview treatment in issue 46, allow us to leave you with the following quote from that article which hints that all this waiting may just have been worth it: "After playing *Super Mario 64* on Nintendo's Ultra 64 (sic), it's hard to believe any other game system could match that machine's power. Drawing off its Silicon Graphics engine, the Ultra 64 rendered every object in the game in startling 3D."

N64 deals with the concept of mirrors with ease.

The cannonball-filled canyon looks particularly tricky.

A lot of the baddies are still not in place.

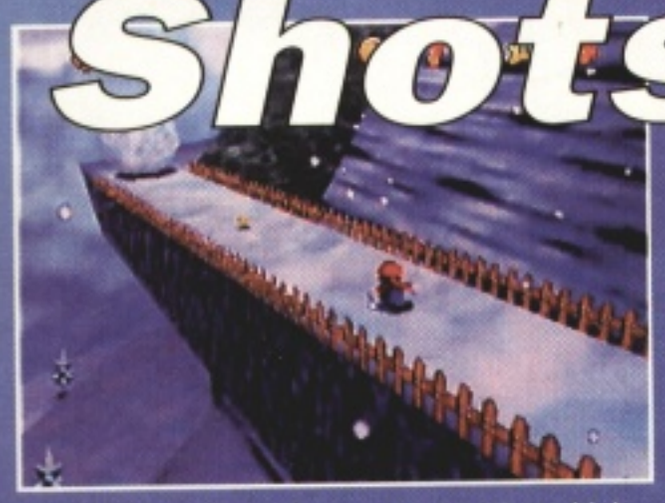
Driven up the wall by the machine's delay?

Above left: Terminator 2 style Mario. Above: The bomb king.

Our perky plumber in profile...

MARIO 64

Shots!



A tricky conundrum. Turn and run or jump high.

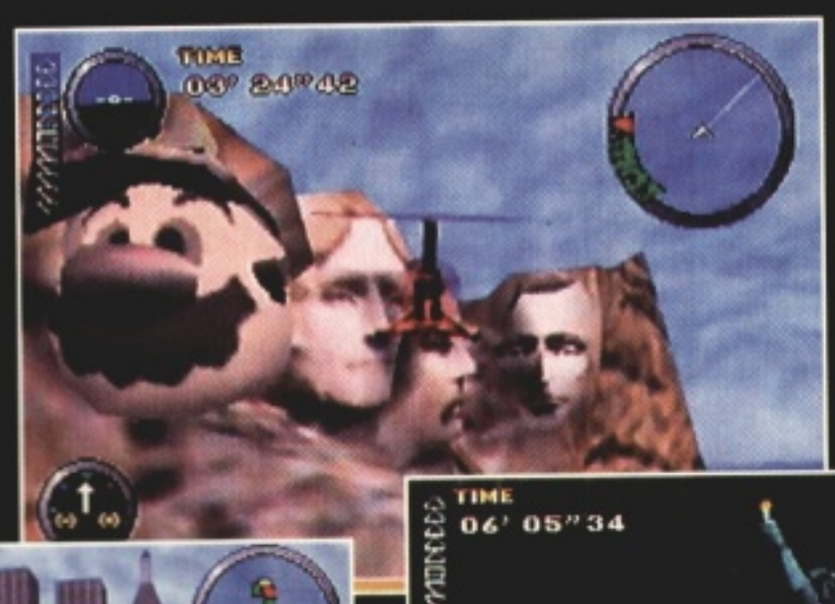
No other game offers so much freedom.

Look. It's going to be the best thing ever, okay?

PLAIN SPOTTING

Another Miyamoto game (in conjunction with Paradigm Simulations) comes out of the woodwork, all but complete and ready to shake the gaming world. Ladies and gentlemen, let us present *Pilotwings 64*!

The good news is that no fog effects are needed in this beauty (see *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, page 6), the US landscape is all in place with none of the update that plagues CD based systems. And it's not just a pretty made up environment either, *Pilotwings 64* showcases landmarks across the US in glorious 3D, although obviously not to scale. Fly through Manhattan, out towards Statten Island past The Statue Of Liberty, through the Grand Canyon, all over the place – by either helicopter, hang-glider or jetpack. Stunning! Enjoy...



That should annoy some patriotic Yanks.

Go on! Knock her head off!

Fly between the twin towers in Manhattan.

WAR

We can exclusively reveal that the upcoming Williams/Midway coin-op, *War Gods*, will indeed be ported over to the Nintendo 64 sometime later in the year.

"*War Gods* is a true 3D beat-'em-up along the lines of *Virtua Fighter*, but with the addition of *Mortal Kombat* style moves," a source told *Super Play*.

The constantly active 3D camera is well sexy and no mistake.

"The N64 version will be as arcade-perfect as you can get," he added.

We doubt whether *War Gods* will be the first beat-'em-up to grace the N64 (*Killer Instinct 64* is certain to be available upon American launch), but it looks certain to be the first of its kind, boasting complete 3D control including: attacks, projectiles, throws, grappling, evasives and fatalities as well as multi-level combos and a constantly active 3D camera.

We'll have loads more on this potential scorcher next month, but we thought you'd appreciate a sneak peek at these screenshots to keep you going.

Under-arm odour? How dare you! Come smell my pits...

Expect the N64 version to run faster than any other home 3D beat-'em-up.

Superstar Soccer 64?

Although not yet officially confirmed, *Super Play* has learnt that Konami's first title for the N64 is to be *Superstar Soccer 64*, a radical upgrade of their 16-bit hits *International Superstar Soccer* and *ISS Deluxe* (*Perfect Eleven* in Japan). The title is likely to boast the most realistic players ever seen in a footy sim, advanced non-repetitive commentary and complete view-point freedom.

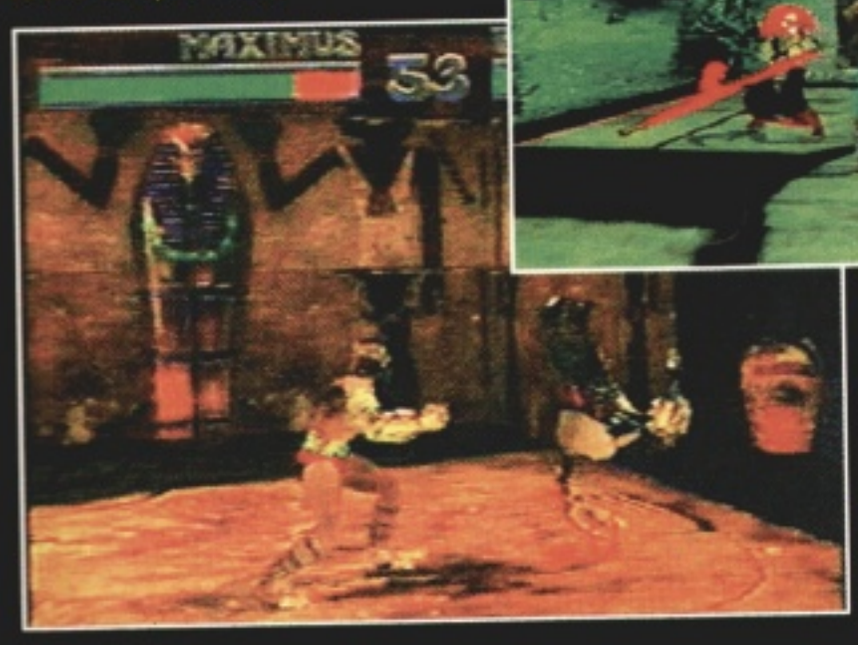
The fact that no version has been announced for the PlayStation or Saturn implies that the title will be exclusive to Nintendo. Just how many Japanese third parties there are secretly working on exclusive titles remains both a mystery and a saliva-inducing prospect. We'll have more on this title as news breaks.

Konami's previous Next Gen footy effort, *Goalstorm*, for the PlayStation.

These graphics are nothing compared to what the N64 delivers.

GODS 64

Bright skirt vs tight Dad-like pants. Is this camp or what?

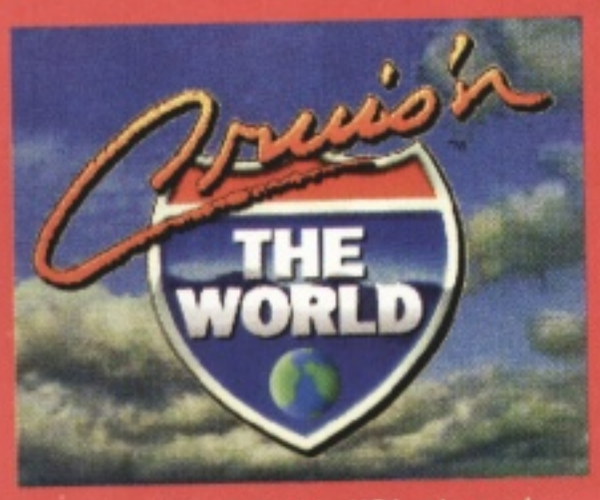


Will *Killer Instinct 64* follow the same formula of 3Dness?

These shots were taken from the 80% complete coin-op.

Here we goo-oh!...

Cruis'n all over the wo-orld! Yes a very poor gag, but very good news if our American correspondent is correct. The way he tells it, *Cruis'n USA* will not be appearing on the N64. Instead, a sequel, *Cruis'n The World*, complete with tweaked graphics, lightning speeds and an even longer course will be gracing Ninty's super console. This is still at the strong rumour stage, but all should be revealed at E3.



Well, the original *Cruis'n USA* coin-op does look more than a little dated these days.

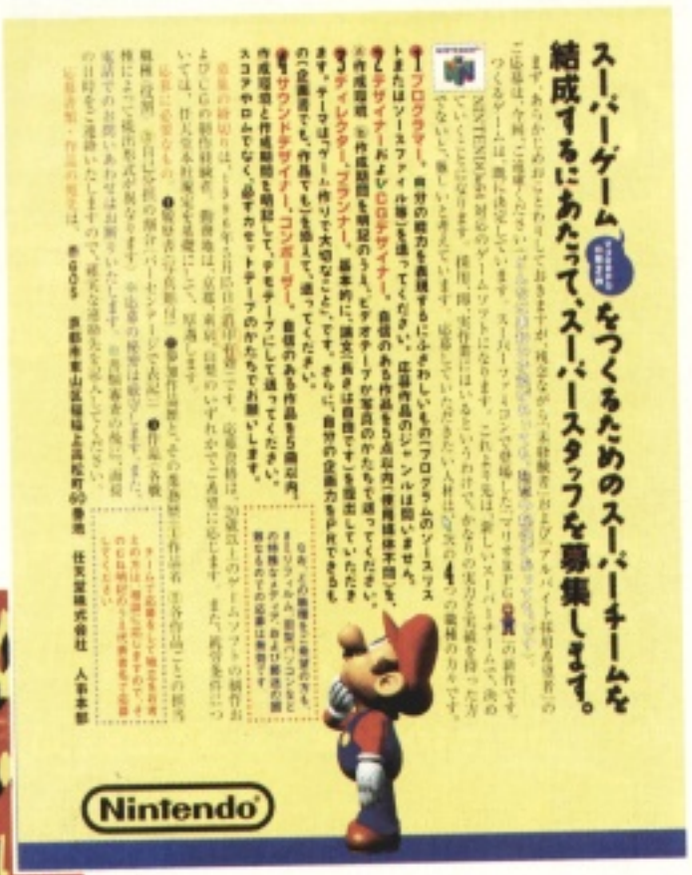
NINTENDO OUT OF IDEAS?

Well, of course they're not, but in last month's Japanese and US gaming press two whole pages were dedicated to Nintendo requesting game ideas and new blood...

The page in US Next Gen mag *Fusion* is clearly aimed at raising the struggling Virtual Boy's profile amongst American gamers, but does smell strongly of 'what sort of bloody games are going to shift this blasted machine in the Western world?' This seems especially likely in light of the alleged recall of the machine in several West Coast retail outlets (see page 20).

In the weekly Japanese gaming bible, *Famicom Tsushin*, an ad states that Nintendo are looking for super staff to produce super games. Among the vacancies listed are: programmers, designers, computer graphic designers, planning directors, sound programmers and composers. If you've got the skills, and you speak the lingo, drop them a line – and tell them *Super Play* sent you.

US mags in particular will be swamped with ads for the N64 from August onwards as Nintendo will support the system with a $40 million advertising campaign, their most ambitious to date.



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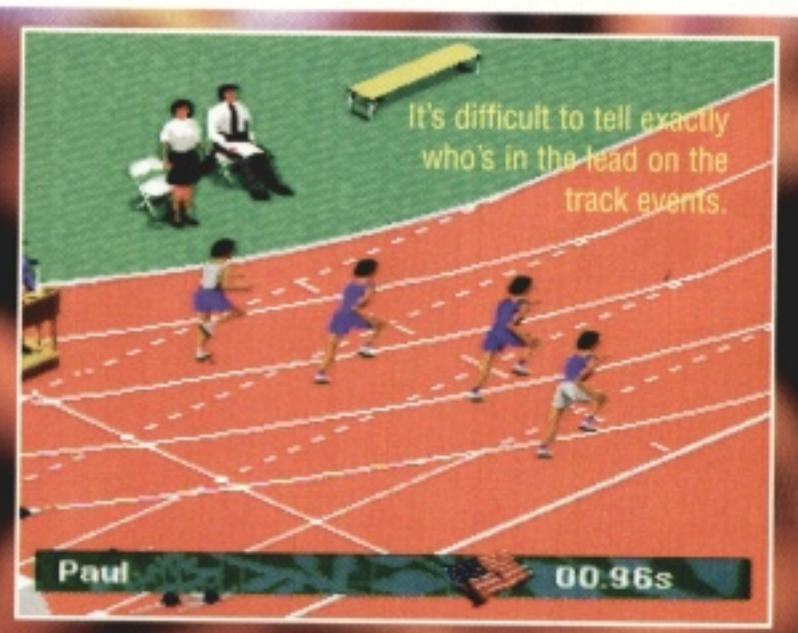


GOING FOR GOLD

Olympic Summer Games

T•HQ • 16Mbits •

To tie in with the Atlanta Summer Olympics later in the year, T•HQ are readying *Olympic Summer Games* for release on the SNES in June.

The game features 10 track and field events: 100m sprint, 110m hurdles, long jump, triple jump, high jump, pole vault, javelin, discus, clay pigeon shooting and discus. 32 nations compete in the games and – you've guessed it! – you choose which one to represent.

These events are mostly viewed from an isometric (*FIFA*-like) perspective which, while all the rage at the moment, often doesn't show exactly what your position is in some events compared to the traditional side-on view. Like the old NES title, *Track And Field*, the gameplay consists of button bashing where rhythm and timing are essential (not good for the thumbs, but a method that is, if nothing else, satisfyingly competitive).

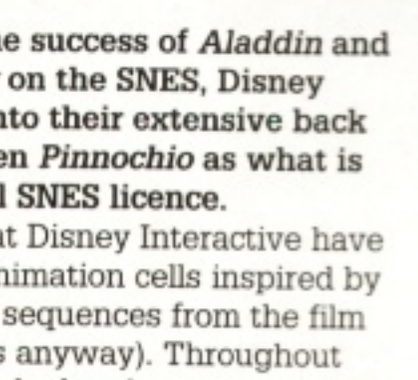
Graphically this is well animated and certainly speedy enough, although the settings could be accused of being a little plain. One nice touch included is the option to challenge actual Olympic world records – impossible from the little we've tried. Expect a full review next issue.

PINNOCHIO

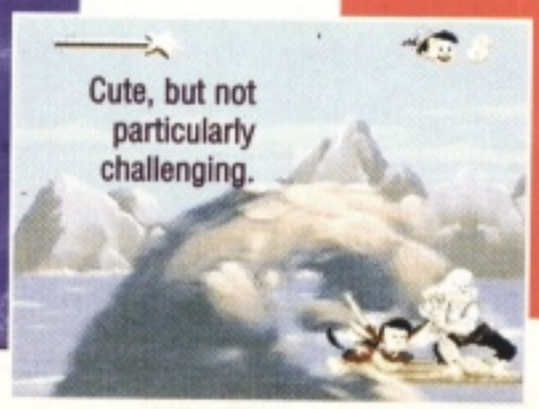
Prompted by the success of *Aladdin* and *The Lion King* on the SNES, Disney have delved into their extensive back catalogue and chosen *Pinnochio* as what is sure to be their final SNES licence.

The developers at Disney Interactive have created over 2,500 animation cells inspired by everyone's favourite sequences from the film (well, certainly theirs anyway). Throughout the nine massive levels the player must battle the wicked coachman on Pleasure Island, scour the ocean floor and cling to the tails of frantic fish in an effort to outrun Monstro only to discover the true value of friendship inside the belly of the whale – no really!

Granted, *Pinnochio* is aimed at the younger end of the games market, but as an example of a 'younger' game it's shaping up to be very impressive indeed.



Typical Disney fodder. Top!



SNES K12 LOOMS

It's probably Rare's worst kept secret. The internet is flooded with stories on the subject, an announcement at E3 is imminent and retailers throughout the world are demanding it – so, just in case you don't already know, *Killer instinct 2* is indeed appearing on the SNES.

Super Play believes that the programming wizards at Rare are putting the finishing touches to what's likely to become the best-selling SNES cart of the year with a view to a simultaneous worldwide release in August. More next month.

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FIGHT!

Following a brief sojourn in the land of 32bit, the *Dragon Ball Z* series continues with *Dragon Ball Z Hyper Dimension* on the SNES (although still only in Japan). Following on from the last game – an RPG – fans will be pleased to learn that they can now indulge their *DBZ* fantasies with this rather tasty-looking beat-'em-up.

Dragon Ball Z Hyper Dimension
Bandai • 24Mbit • Out now (Japan)

On the surface of things, *Hyper Dimension* is similar in principle to previous installments in the series, although, this time, the graphics and gameplay are much improved with greater detail and precision. *Dragon Ball Z* returns with 10 fighters and a choice of eight fighting locations.

Fighting techniques have been greatly enhanced. Each character in the game has three different fighting techniques for the player to master, so there's plenty scope for developing your skills in the game. The first of the techniques is called "tsujoo gijuutsu", this is your basic option, which players familiar with previous games in the series will already be accustomed to. The second set of techniques is known as "kodanwasa" or the flashing bullet technique. This method of fighting is based on the projection of fire balls (now there's a surprise) – again, this is different for each character. The final option is "3D wasa" or the 3D method, and it is this which marks a real turning-point in the series. Usually, fights and attacks take place in a linear fashion, only this time, if you go for the 3D attack, the player can use the depth of the background and attack his enemy from all different angles. During 3D attacks, the characters are seen from various angles, giving a pseudo 3D appearance to the action.

Goten prepares to fight off the menace of Mr Blo…oops – Buu.

As usual, *Dragon Ball Z Hyper Dimension* battles take place both on land and in the air.

There are two further additions to the gameplay. One new feature is the rush battle system. When two characters are fighting close to each other, a yellow aura appears around them. When this is present, characters can use certain special attacks to heap damage onto their opponent. With the other new method of play, "Futobashiwasa", the player can grab and throw his enemy horizontally or vertically. When you do this, the background automatically changes. If the enemy is thrown vertically, the fight takes place in mid-air.

Although graphically 'spruced-up', *Hyper Dimension*'s backgrounds feature the same old *DBZ* locations.

Goten and Buu are gagging for a fight in front of the Xmas trees.

Goten (again) cowers before Piccolo's mighty stupid arm. Must be awkward with that trailing beside you.

Just for the record those ten characters are: Son Goku (who has a top side slash attack), Vegeta (whose tour de force is his driving elbow attack), Goten-kusu, Bezito, Son Gohan, Piccolo, Freezer, Cell, Majin Buu and Buu. Buu has the uncanny ability of changing shape from a pink ball to his real body. This sequence uses some rather nice morphing techniques.

Hyper Dimension takes all the good points of the previous fighting games in the series and offers some brand-new and well detailed characters and backgrounds. And from what we've seen of *Dragonball Z Hyper Dimension* so far, the gameplay is looking pretty good.

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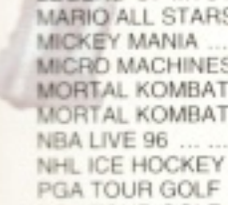
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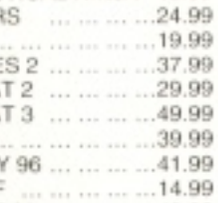
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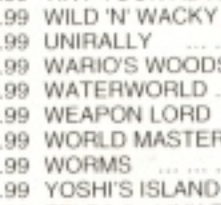
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FANTA

After years in the making, Namco's Tales Of Phantasia recently topped the mighty Dragon Quest VI in Nintendo's notoriously harsh internal ratings system. But does a bigger cart let you build a better RPG?...

Tales Of Phantasia
Namco • 48Mbit • Out now (Japan)

It's probably logical that it would be left to an RPG to come up with the SNES's first 48Mbit cart, but that it should come from the current darlings of the PlayStation – Namco – rather than Square or Enix really is a surprise.

Rather than go for a truly epic storyline (for a game that's twice the size of *FFVI*(III), it still only weighs in at around 55 hours) though, Namco have chosen to sell *Phantasia* on a gimmick – sound. There are around 16Mbits of voice samples hidden away within its chippage, including a full theme song, voice samples for each of the character's spells and attacks, and no less than 64 music tracks. Should you dismiss this as merely inconsequential, then Namco make sure you get the most from what surely must have been the major part of the game's budget by providing a 'sound mode' the like of which you've never seen before. Sporting a fully-fledged graphic equaliser with pitch, volume and even reverb control, you're assured at least a good 20 minutes worth of messing about and laughing at the English track listing names ('Good wine makes good blood' apparently) before you even start on the game proper.

Your party members aren't always the most intelligent of companions.

Kosuke Fujishima's character portraits bear little if any resemblance to your dumpy sprite.

What *Phantasia* the game boils down to is a standard RPG plot which has your character returning home one day only to find that his entire village has been raised to the ground and his family slaughtered. And, what's more, the perpetrators didn't even get what they were after – the precious amulet hanging around your neck! Worry not, though, it's not long before you're captured and relieved of the trinket which just happens to be keeping a terrible demon locked away. Said monster is duly released and the mystically charged effluent truly hits the fan. There's nothing for it then but to travel back in time to before the demon was banished (cue the intro sequence – one hundred years previously) to get rid of him once and for all. A tough job for anyone, least of all a band of adventures which, despite character designs by anime and manga star Kosuke (*Oh My Goddess!*, *You're Under Arrest*) Fujishima, look like three year-olds after fancy dress day at kindergarten.

One hundred years ago your ancestors sealed away the demon that your amulet has now unleashed.

At least Mint has the good sense to heal you when your hit points get a tad low.

Graphically, though, *Tales Of Phantasia* is far from babyish. Although not quite matching *Seiken Densetsu III* (*Secret Of Mana 2*) in actual quality (the colour scheme used is rather unimaginative) it more than makes up for this in the wide variety of locations and special effects.

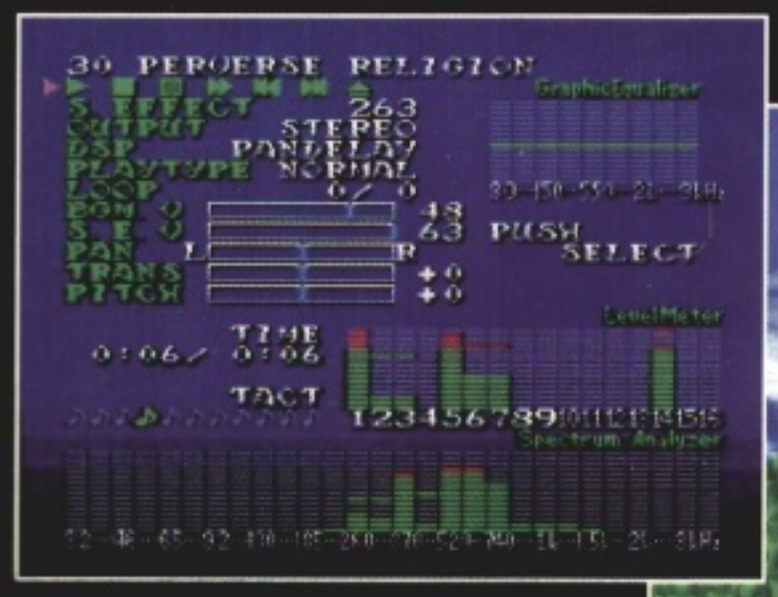
What initially seems like a typical turn-based game actually turns out to be a bizarre mixture of action and menu-driven games. The usual random battle encounters

Have birds, will engage in obligatory Mode 7 flying sequence. Well, it saves all that walking.

SY QUEST

Special effects make up for some rather tatty design work, like this rather bog standard boss chappie.

are still very much in evidence (far too much actually, there are many times when you won't have taken more than a couple of steps before being thrown into battle – something Namco should take a long hard look at, if a Western version ever comes up), but once within the battle screen you can move and attack freely (well, move left or right and strike actually). Although you only directly control your own character you can give orders to your party to hold off or attack, but – alas! – when given full reign to do what they want they steam in with such gusto, wasting their magic points on far too powerful spells, that you hardly get a look in.



Now this is what we call a sound mode. Zy and Wil spent ages here.

So eager are your companions to smack the baddie that you can have a hard time getting in a hit yourself.

Tales Of Phantasia isn't the crowning glory of Super Famicom RPGs that its size and prominence suggests it might be, but it is up there among the best. If only Namco could do something about all those battles.

Sometimes *Phantasia* equals the best that Square has to offer graphically. "Hey, I can see your house from here."

A hand save pentagram usually means there's something nasty around the corner.

THE CHARTS

Compiled by: Chart-Track
© ELSPA

ChartTrack

For weekly UK SNES chart updates you can either tune into Digitiser, Teletext page 470, Channel 4 or use your Dad's PC to read the Super Play page on the Internet at http://www.futurenet.co.uk

For the first time in living memory, or something, the first six of the SNES top ten are exactly the same as last month. Freaky or what? Alright, very odd at least.

OFFICIAL UK SUPER NINTENDO CHART

1	DIDDY'S KONG QUEST	Nintendo	SP40 82%
2	KILLER INSTINCT	Nintendo	SP36 85%
3	YOSHI'S ISLAND	Nintendo	SP36 94%
4	FIFA SOCCER '96	Electronic Arts	SP37 84%
5	SUPER METROID	Nintendo	SP25 91%
6	SUPERSTAR SOCCER DELUXE	Konami	SP38 94%
7	SUPER PUNCHOUT!	Nintendo	SP27 90%
8	THEME PARK	Ocean	SP36 92%
9	PGA TOUR GOLF '96	T•HQ	SP42 85%
10	PRIMAL RAGE	Time Warner Interactive	SP36 60%

BLABBERMOUTH

with Kris and Tel

Howdy doody, Terence little fella, Kris here. Sorry I didn't get in touch with you last month, my anti-corrosion warranty ran out and I made the mistake of having an under body wash. Any top goss out there?

Too right there is. For starters word around the campfire is that several West Coast US retailers have had all their Virtual Boys recalled by Nintendo. Whether they're somehow faulty, just not selling, or part of some particularly obtuse Nintendo relaunch plan has yet to be confirmed.

That's not gossip, the poor Virtual Boy was destined to fail. What about the Los Angeles E3 next month? Any idea what's gonna be shown there?

The way I hear it, we could be seeing debuts for three major new SNES titles – *Donkey Kong Country 3*, *Killer Instinct 2* and *FX Skiing*.

And let's not forget the much touted 40 meg SNES version of *Street Fighter Alpha*, Tel. Capcom would be idiots not to show that.

You're not wrong, my little rusty chum. And I hear that E3 will also have Nintendo 64 debuts for *Doom 64* and *FIFA '97*.

I thought that *Doom 64* was going to premiere at ECTS in London on April 14th.

So did the organisers, Tel. In fact, they were so convinced that they shouted about it on their press release for the show until GT Interactive set them straight.

What do you make of Nintendo purchasing a $30 million stake in the Taiwanese 64 megabit ROM manufacturer, Macronix?

Apparently, Macronix supplied Nintendo with 64 megabit ROMs on a trial basis and undercut the competition to such an extent that, in the words of Victor Kiam, Nintendo now proclaim "we were so impressed, we bought the company." This should cut the price of N64 software considerably.

Yet another of my metallic sources has begun whispering about a 2D Mario game for the N64, possibly a flat-out sequel to *Yoshi's Island*. Have you heard anything, Tel?

Not a sausage as yet, but with the level of media attention focused on the N64 at the moment (there was even a story in this month's *Popular Science*) we'll have solid facts very soon, I suspect.

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Which of the original characters have been omitted from *KI2*?

Answer:

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2. Multiple entries are fine, but again, no photocopies.
3. Employees of Future Publishing and Rare can't play. Bless 'em.
4. The editor's decision is final – unless she elects you to make tea.

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Answer:

Name:

Address:

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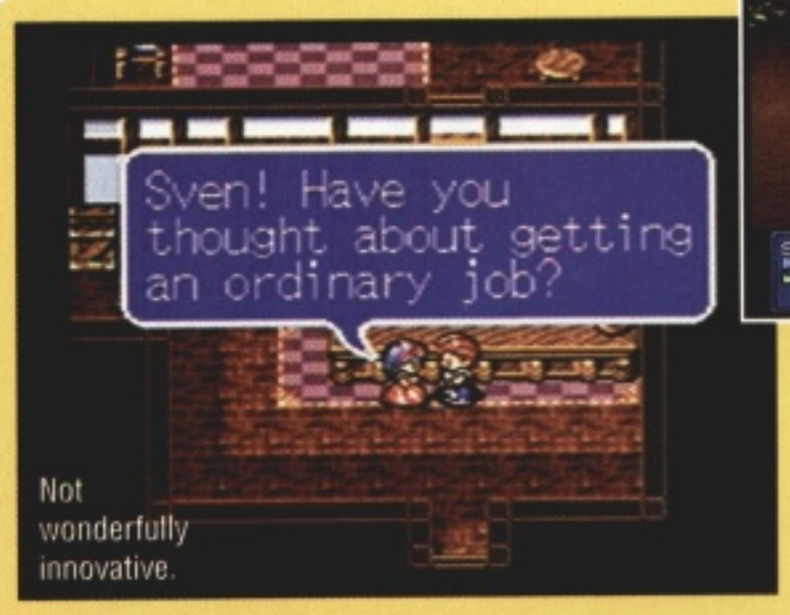
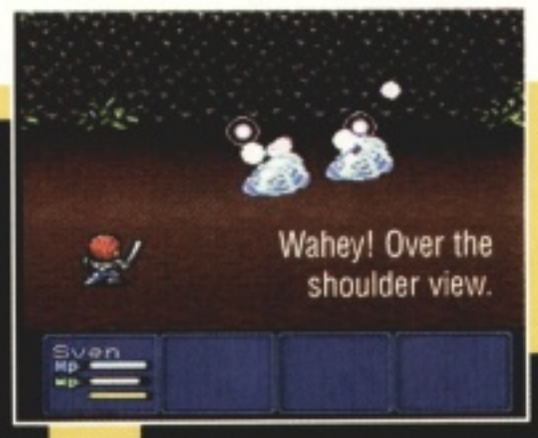
ISSUE 44 JUNE 1996





POINTY HATS

Lufia 2

Natsume ● 24Mbits

Once relegated to the dusty vaults of Taito (it was their last SNES title before they dropped 16-bit development and support) the highly anticipated RPG, *Lufia 2*, has received a spring clean by Natsume and should be released in the US early this summer.

Lufia 2 features seven characters, of which you control a party of four, including the obligatory fighters and magic users, and a leader – a young monster-hunter called Maxim. Battle sequences are of the traditional turn-based variety with one striking improvement – the inclusion of an IP meter which measures the level of rage a character builds up as the battle progresses. When the meter is full, it can be used to dispatch a berserk attack. Another innovation comes in the shape of a continuous attack which can be performed by holding down the left collar button.

Graphically, this is a slightly better game than its predecessor. The settings are considerably more varied and it may be more detailed (it's the subject of an office debate at the moment). As before, the perspective varies between *Zelda*-esque overhead views in dungeons and the like, and *Dragon Quest*-esque overworld views. Sonically, from the brief snippet that we've heard, this is very much a Square inspired game (there's something distinctly *FF3* about the tunes).

Lufia 2 is now fully translated, and, apart from a handful of bugs, is ready to roll. A full review is imminent.

TETRIS ENLISTED TO SALVAGE VB

Nintendo are counting on *3D Tetris* to change the Virtual Boy's fortunes later in the year. The most popular puzzle game in history will spearhead a US relaunch for the ill-fated system sometime in the summer.

Although no two-player mode is included in the cart there are three modes of play, and, of course, a whole new dimension. Normal mode is, as its name suggests, similar to the original *Tetris*, except that this time there are 3D blocks filling a 3D space. Puzzle Mode begins by showing you a shape constructed from various blocks which disappears leaving you to recreate that shape from memory, and Centre Fill Mode requires the player to create a symmetrical shape around a hole before selecting the correct block to fill the hole (no, we're not too sure what that mode's all about either). Options include a depth of field adjuster and the ability to move the camera angle during play.

We'll have more on this title if the system ever gets a UK release, if not, forget what you've just read – it really doesn't affect you. Sorry about that.

DISNEY GET SHIRTY

Big hitters Disney Interactive are believed to have dropped Nintendo support affecting two SNES titles and delaying a third. The two cancelled games are the 'eagerly awaited' *Gargoyles* and the 'no great loss' *Pocahontas*. The excuse given by Disney Interactive HQ is "poor sales projections due to the lack of interest in current titles on Sega platforms." The delayed title is *Maui Mallard*. It's believed Disney are waiting to release the title on all platforms simultaneously in order to evaluate the market for further games development.

Erm, that'll be the Disney Interactive logo then.

STARFOX 2 RESURRECTED

Although the world assumed that with the advent of *Starfox 64* on the N64 the much touted *Starfox 2* for the SNES was cancelled – the world was wrong! Well, at least according to our US correspondent.

Apparently, the decision was made soon after the US N64 delay was announced earlier in the year. *Starfox 2* has been complete for almost a year, so you can expect a release any time now.

It's better than the original! Release it now, you fools!

Don't forget, this boasts a two-player split-screen mode.

Mohawk and Headphone Jack

T•HQ ● 16Mbits

QUICKER THAN SONIC!

M17X (known colloquially as 'The Party Planet') is a low gravity environment packed with caves connected by a mysterious network of tubes and dimensional vortexes. The inhabitants are known as Morfs whose sunglasses and portable CD attire suggest that their main priority in life is to have a good time. Unfortunately, one evil morf, General Headslot, has constructed an army of robotic soldiers (known as Bots) to dominate the planet and put a stop to all the partying antics. Headslot has stolen all the CDs and only Mohawk and his best mate Headphone Jack are brave enough to navigate the caves and attempt to defeat Headslot and his Bots.

Mohawk And Headphone Jack is one of the fastest games ever to grace the SNES. *Unirally* has to take the title – sorry, T•HQ. On top of that, it utilises innovative scaling and rotation effects that defy adequate description – look, it's dead fast and clever, okay?

The unfinished version that we played was a little bugged, but still managed to rocket at dizzying speeds, and, together with the 14 huge levels and bosses to match, may well qualify as the most original title T•HQ have had a hand in to date.

Collect the CDs in a highly original 'coin' type of way.

The first boss moves quick and is pretty tough.

This strange cutaway sequence indicates the mid-level save-point.

BARGAIN HUNTER

Welcome to our new regular bargain hunter corner! Every month we'll be sticking two fingers up at developers who no longer create for the SNES, while scouring the country for the best of SNES deals in what must be the most impressive back catalogue in videogame history. This month we've chosen four well-known mail order companies, studied their catalogues and picked out what we consider to be the essential buys. Next month the focus will shift to High Street games retailers – yet another reason why you can't afford to miss *Super Play*! Use this in conjunction with our What Cart! guide and you can't go wrong!

GAMESWORLD

Tel: 01664 480211
Fax: 01644 480211

Gamesworld specialise in second-hand games, so while they don't offer the best deal in the world, they do have a massive range and, best of all, when you buy two £25 titles you can get a £20 title for just a tenner! All the games are fully tested, boxed and come with full instructions. Check this little lot out...

£25 SNES TITLES

Vortex, Winter Olympics, Super Drop Zone, Streetfighter 2 Turbo, Star Trek: Starfleet Academy, SeaQuest DSV, Biker Mice From Mars, Virtua Soccer, Warlock, Sensible Soccer, Stunt Race FX, WWF Raw, Rock 'n' Roll Racing, Super Ice Hockey, Secret Of Mana, Wild And Wacky Sports, Primal Rage and Fever Pitch Soccer.

£20 SNES Titles

Total Carnage, Axelay, Captain America, Warp Speed, Pocky And Rocky, Crash Dummies, Hurricans, Street Racer, Flashback, Shaq Fu, NFL Quarterback Club, Chaos In Windy City, Jurassic Park, Mortal Kombat 2, Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure, Judge Dredd, Justice League, Super Star Wars, Animaniacs, Time Trax, Lemmings 2, Kick Off 3, Jimmy Connors Tennis, NHL '96, The Last Action Hero, Double Dragon, Micro Machines, Mystic Quest, Road Runner, Cool Spot, Alien 3, Actraiser, Plok, R-type 3, Dragon's Lair, Tiny Toons.

The wonderful *Secret Of Mana* is just a phone call and £25 away!

Super Play Choice

Stunt Race FX
Streetfighter 2 Turbo
Lemmings 2

PRICE – £60

NEW GENERATION CONSOLES

Tel: 0113 2306007
Fax: 0113 2306007

The following is a mere taster of New Generation Consoles' extensive games library. They claim to be first with all imports and are also partial to a bit of part exchange haggling if you're in the mood. Who could resist the *Killer Instinct/Doom* bundle? Top stuff.

Killer Instinct & Doom bundle	£59
Judge Dredd	£25
Putty Squad	£20

The surprisingly addictive *Putty Squad*. Now just £20.

Big Sky Trooper	£25
Illusion Of Time	£20
Super Punch Out	£20
Hagane	£20
SeaQuest DSV	£20
Kid Klown	£20
Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball	£25
Mega Man X	£20
Weaponlord	£25

Super Play Choice

Killer Instinct & Doom bundle
Illusion Of Time
Super Punch Out

PRICE – £100

VIDEO GAME CENTRE

Tel: 01202 527314
Fax: 01202 527314

King Arthur RPG (US) £9.99
Zombies (US) £14.99
Cybernator (US) £14.99
Contra 3 (US) £14.99
Cool World (US) £9.99
Mega Man Soccer (US) £9.99
Street Racer £14.99

Surely the pick of the month in terms of sheer bargains (*SF2 Turbo* for a tenner?), the *Super Play* choice is just a must buy – only a fool (or someone who owns the games) could turn down such a bargain. They also offer the latest Universal adaptor for just £10 or £5 with the purchase of a game. Irresistible.

Super Gameboy (JAP) £24.99

Battletoads (US) £9.99
Kid Klown (US) £9.99
Super Metroid (US/JAP) £19.99
Batman Returns (JAP) £9.99
Axelay (JAP) £9.99
Streetfighter 2 Turbo (JAP/US) £9.99

Super Play Choice

SF2 Turbo
Super Metroid
Zombies
Street Racer

PRICE – £60

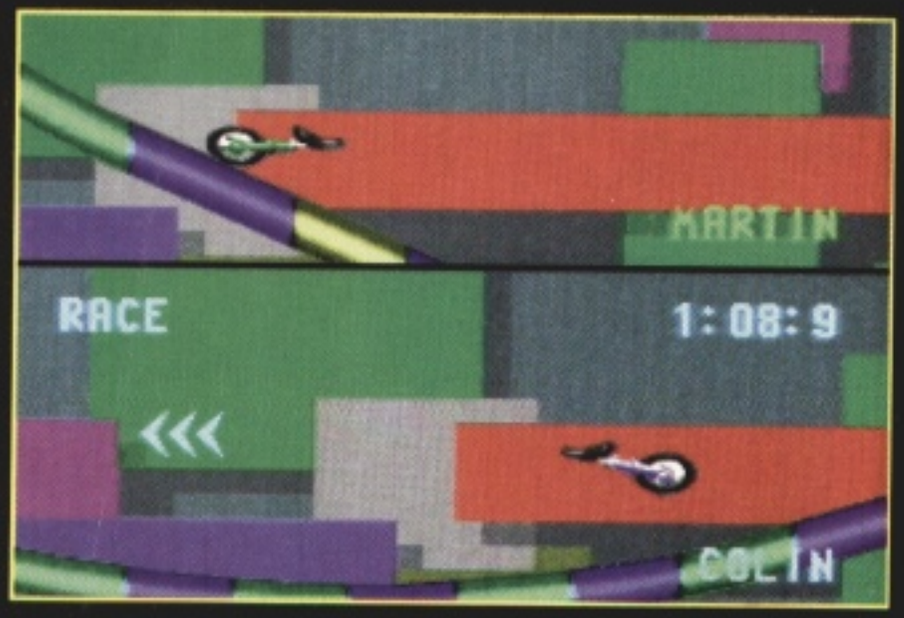
SPECIAL RESERVE

Tel: 01279 600204
Fax: 01279 726842
Email: enquiries@reserve.co.uk

They may charge a (very slight) membership fee, but for the service Special Reserve provide it's worth ever penny. This is just a tiny sample of the stunning offers they put together every month and on top of that, you can even email your orders if you're a little on the shy side.

Super Bomberman £15.99
Super Bomberman 2 ..... £22.99
PGA Tour Golf £14.99
Legend Of The Mystical Ninja £19.99
Earthworm Jim 2 ..... £42.99
Mortal Kombat 2 ..... £29.99
Illusion Of Time £26.49
Secret Of Mana £28.49

Stunt Race FX £27.49
Super Metroid £19.99
Unirally £24.99
Zelda 3 – A Link To The Past £19.99
Doom £29.99
Theme Park £37.99
Street Racer £21.99



The fastest SNES game ever for £25!

The best multi-player game ever for £16!

Super Play Choice

Secret Of Mana
Super Bomberman
Super Metroid

PRICE – £64.50

THE GAME OF LIFE

Gone, thankfully, are the days when the village elders would cross themselves and declare games were bad for you. It's long been recognised that, aside from being, y'know, **FUN**, games provide an opportunity to improve your hand-eye co-ordination skills. They've been used in hospitals to help patients recovering from brain surgery to visualise movement, and to help patients recovering from hand operations to regain confidence in their own dexterity.

This set us thinking. Could it be possible to actually learn something from a game? Were the world's videogames in fact a vast untapped reservoir of educational content? Could you, in short, use a skill taught by a game in real life?

We owed it to humanity to see.

HOW IT WORKED

Super Play's reviewers are renowned for eating, sleeping, drinking, breathing, sniffing and coddling games, so it was a simple task to secure ones who had never, for example, learned to drive, or to cook. The tests were carried out under stringent scientific conditions – each test subject was given 10 minutes to play the appropriate game (or relevant part thereof), was handed the necessary props, and then left to see if they could apply their game-found knowledge to a real situation which otherwise would leave them helpless. The results were recorded...

TEST 1

SKILL
SUMMONING A FIREBALL

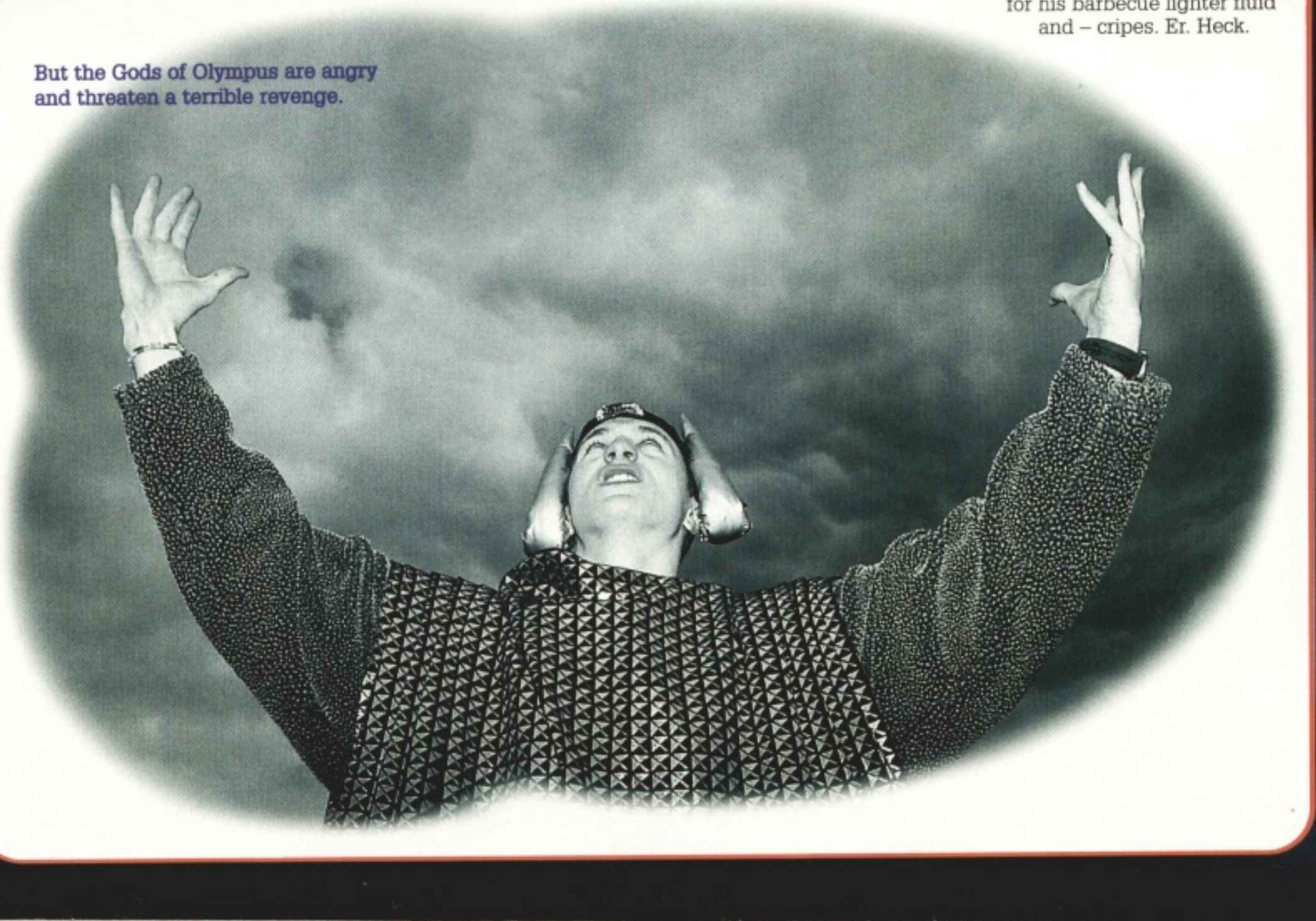
GAME
STREET FIGHTER 2

Like many people, Christian Day (from *Total!* magazine) hadn't bothered learning the moves. "I don't play it much, and it's entertaining to beat an experienced player by hitting buttons at random, because then they argue that although they may have lost at that point, overall they're by far the better player. I then refuse to play them ever again, leaving them fuming impotently." Hardly sporting. "Immeasurably satisfying, though."

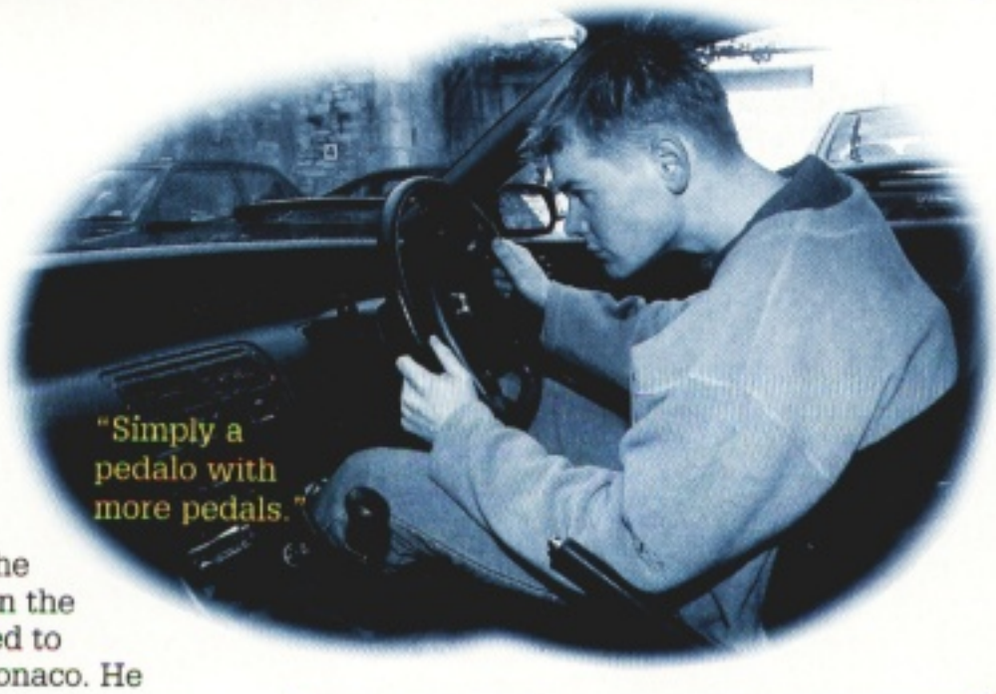
REALITY

To his credit, Christian applied himself thoroughly to mastering the manoeuvre. "It's all to do with summoning your energies," explained resident beat-'em-up expert Zy. "Try summoning your energies." "I can't even tell which muscle to flex," cursed Chris. Nor was there help from "rolling yourself back as if moving an invisible D-pad." Finally Chris bribed a judge for his barbecue lighter fluid and – cripes. Er. Heck.

But the Gods of Olympus are angry and threaten a terrible revenge.



TEST 2
SKILL
DRIVING A CAR



GAME
F1 POLE POSITION
Steve Bradley (*The Official Playstation Mag*) was less confident with this F1 sim – not the SNES's best driving game, but its most accurate. "There's so much to think about," he said, trying to decide on the tyres his car would need to conquer the track in Monaco. He performed dismally, got confused over gears and braking at corners. On his second go, he concentrated on the accelerator, finishing a respectable third. "There's always a trick," he confided.

REALITY
As expected, Steve had trouble transferring the steering metaphor to a real car. "The joypad was so much more elegant," he groaned. "But this is pleasantly tactile," he admitted, twisting the wheel. The rules of the experiment were quite strict, and we had to let Steve work out the function of each pedal and button. "This is easy," he scoffed after revving the engine and finding the accelerator. "The tyres are already on, and it's not even raining." Fortunately the car was on private property.

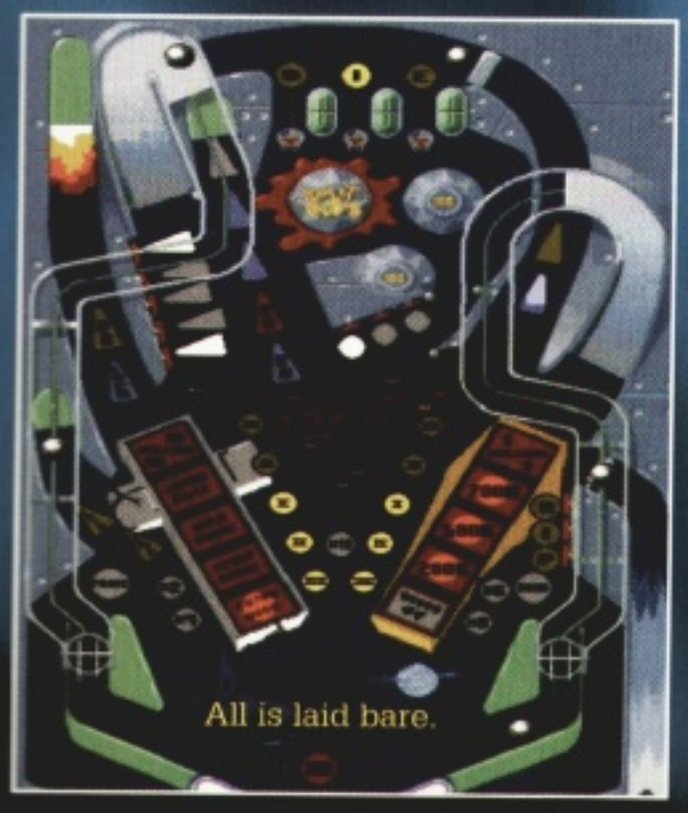
"Sweet Jesus and all the lovely angels in heaven."

Pinball – but really. Or IS it? Obviously not.

TEST 3
SKILL
PLAYING PINBALL

GAME
PINBALL DREAMS
Test subject Sean Atkins quickly absorbed the essentials of the videogame simulation. "It's all in the flippers," he explained, showing a firm grasp of the principles of bouncing the rollovers and trickling the ball to the other flipper for a clearer shot. He scored a creditable 180,000,000 on the Steel Wheel table.

REALITY
Moving to the real thing (the glitzy but easy *Demolition Man* table, which is sort of similar in layout) Sean was at first rather dismayed by the lack of scrolling. "I have to keep looking at the flippers, rather than follow the balls," he complained, "and nudging's much harder." Nonetheless, his video skills paid off. His score – 700,000,000. An excellent first attempt. Perhaps videogames could indeed enrich the lives of their worldwide audience.



TEST 4
SKILL
COOKERY

"Pierre is the food master. I tread in his footsteps."

GAME
OUT TO LUNCH
An experienced platform player, Alison had no trouble with this charmingly French game. "Le Chef Noir! Egad!" she cursed as the nefarious nemesis released his carefully-penned ingredients, and, "Bon appetit, fiend midget!" as he confounded his foe with a well-aimed flour bag. Clearly she was much taken with the game, insisting on finishing her round and eventually falling prey – "Aïe!" – to botulism.

REALITY
Alison had been closely observing Pierre Le Chef's technique. Into the provided cooking pot went cheese, tomatoes, lemons, eggs, potatoes, mushrooms, noodles, pineapples, peppers and (from a secret bonus level) cherries and oranges. The pot was lidded, the heat turned up, and the time passed by hurling flour bags. The result was a sinister purée no-one would touch. "Pierre has failed me," sobbed Alison.

"Vive Pierre!"

"I vow to destroy all tiny people."

TEST 5
SKILL
PLAYING THE HARMONICA

GAME
PLOK
Nick Moyle (from *Total Football*) had never played this slightly upsetting platformer in which your character fires limbs instead of bullets until he is reduced to a wriggling torso. We assured him it was Plok's harmonica skills we wanted him to study. In fact, only on the title screen does Plok play, saving the grimacing Nick from seeing the projectile dismemberment at all. He was strangely disappointed.

REALITY
Ten minutes' intensive study had taught Nick nothing of diaphragm clenching or tongue control ("Plok doesn't even have one") and there was nothing for it but to exactly emulate Plok's technique and blow hard while moving the harmonica randomly. Cunningly, we had arranged for Nick to perform in a modern jazz club, and he was a smash hit. Slightly manufactured, but a success nonetheless.

TEST 6
SKILL
GOLF

GAME
PGA TOUR
Sean was unsure of the helpfulness of playing *PGA* at all. "It's nothing like real golf," he pointed out. "Look, I press a button to make my character swing the club, following the line of a huge curved arrow. Granted I'm placing my shots and accounting for the wind direction, but it's hardly going to improve my real game, unless you're going to attach a giant cardboard arrow to my back or something."

REALITY
We attached a giant cardboard arrow to Sean's back. Surprisingly, it worked really well, forcing him to swing the club properly. "I may have shot a 3 on this hole" – it was par 4; we only had time for one hole before the golf course owners became suspicious:

"– but it was almost automatic. I had very little to do. The wind wasn't even blowing." A success then, if not a moral victory.

TEST 7
SKILL
TOWN PLANNING

GAME
SIM CITY
Due to the complexity of this, well, city sim, Ollie's 10 minutes were played using a saved position from deep within the game. "I found the rules extremely easy to pick up," he explained after his go was over, "and I'm fairly happy with how I've done." He'd certainly improved on the original reviewer's city, with a new leisure complex and upgraded amenities carrying him to election victory. Seconds later his city was trampled by Godzilla, but we hadn't the heart to tell him.

REALITY
Ollie put his skills to the test by writing a letter to Bath City Council, outlining his proposals for urban renewal. To ensure a reply, Ollie pretended he was eight.
Needless to say, they didn't reply but they did send him a court summons over his overdue Council Tax payments.

TEST 8
SKILL
GARDENING

GAME
SECRET OF MANA
In common with many action RPGs, *Secret Of Mana* encourages elementary gardening – trim a grassy knoll and you'll undoubtedly find some leftover treasure. It's a little-known fact that if you cut down every blade of grass in the game, you're rewarded with a display of incredible blooms, but obviously we didn't expect Wil to achieve this in 10 minutes. "I feel I have grasped the principles of lawn management," he announced, and this was sufficient.

REALITY
"The most difficult part was finding something to garden with," said Wil. (Eventually *Amiga Power* volunteered their sickle.) "The actual work is easy." His strokes were even, his pace rhythmic – he was, indeed, gardening, to the delight of local landowner James Dugan. And – yes! – Wil uncovered some treasure, a sort of jewelled rabbit that looked to be worth at least £20,000. James kept it, of course.

TEST 9
SKILL
MULTILINGUALISM

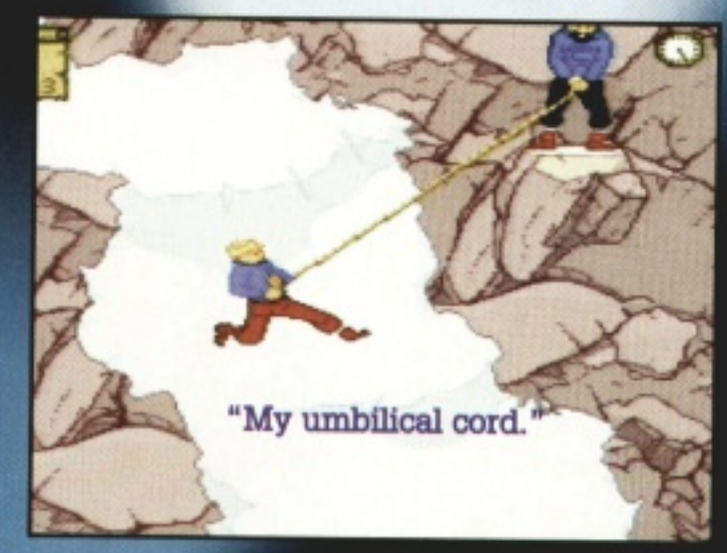
GAME
SEIKEN DENSETSU 3
It was difficult to maintain a lofty detachment for this test. Carefully shielding Sean from notorious original-Japanese RPG übermeister Wil Overton, we sat him before the plumply story-heavy, untranslated *Secret Of Mana 2*. Within seconds poor old Sean was in trouble. "Where were they telling me to go?" he whimpered, wandering the game world, vainly searching for the next trigger to advance the plot.

A pitiful sight.

TEST 11
SKILL
GAMBLING

GAME
CASINO
"I used to play Brag for matchsticks," announced Wil, "so this'll be a pushover." But it wasn't. The card game on the cart was poker, which is unhelpfully similar while being completely different. Nevertheless, with the help of the instruction manual, Wil accrued a pot of $107 before losing it all at roulette.

REALITY
Wil sat in on the weekly poker game. His technical play was competent – his go at *Casino* had refreshed his card skills – but he was uncomfortable with the other players. ("It's much harder bluffing real people.") He lost steadily, wiping out on a big hand when he couldn't remember if a straight beat a flush. "Poker just has too many cards," he concluded disgustedly.



REALITY
Had the intricacies of kanji construction rubbed off on our test subject? No. With (obviously) no idea on pronunciation, Sean gamely attempted to communicate by copying down the ideograms from memory. The result was a page of scrawls and an alarmed tourist couple (who spoke perfect English, distressing Sean even more). "I'd have been all right parroting the speech from *Parodius 3*," he mumbled. "Or using the universal language of mime."

REALITY
Tony confidently approached the real Towers Of Hanoi (the idea here being to swap the discs so the stacks are upside-down, again without moving the same piece twice consecutively) and we waited slightly apprehensively. A solution was, after all, supposed to end the world. 15 minutes later, Tony started again. 15 later still, Tony went back to *Tintin In Tibet*. Another 15, and he gave up. "You can't do it with three," he said. As have so many before him. Phew.

TEST 12
SKILL
SOLVING THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

GAME
TINTIN IN TIBET
This astonishingly poor licence had one redeeming feature – a variation on the Towers Of Hanoi puzzle, historically reputed to bring about the end of the world if solved. Tony Mott was left to work out how to order the books by colour without moving the same book twice in a row. "Impossible," gasped Tony after 15 minutes. We drew his attention to the fourth stack caddishly hidden by the scrolling. "Simplicity itself," he added, 73 seconds later.

TEST 10
SKILL
SHOPLIFTING

GAME
ZELDA GB
Before long in *Zelda 4* (but not 3 (curse) but probably in 5, so nyer) you need the bow and arrow – on sale for a ruinous 980 rupees. The game permits you to steal the bow if you can find how to elude the shopkeeper. "It's just like a caper movie," said an excited Zy. In under a minute he'd discovered you simply wait until the shopkeeper looks the other way.

REALITY
Zy sauntered into the local newsie's, the picture of cool. Loitering by the sweet counter until the vital moment (we'd agreed to allow a chocolate bar for the bow and arrow) he sprang into action. Success! Further emulating the game, when Zy returned to the shop he was recognised and arrested (but not electrocuted), and with the imposition of a criminal record, branded forever as THIEF.

TEST 13
SKILL
KILLING ANTS

GAME
ZOMBIES ATE MY NEIGHBOURS
With philosophical conundrums out

of the way, it seemed logical to consider atomic mutation. What if giant ants were to seek to take over the world? Plunged into one of the later levels of the 15th Best Game Ever (ANTS!, appropriately enough) Ollie found his water pistol hopelessly inadequate. "Wait – this strimmer," he offered. Sure enough, the whizzing blades of the electric sickle made short work of johnny formicid. (But not as short as the fearsome Martian Bubble Gun.) "What fun," chuckled our test subject, and, yes, it was.

REALITY
Disregarding the Martian Bubble Gun idea as silly, Ollie pressed on with a garden strimmer attached to six extension leads so he could reach the headquarters of his nearest not yet mutated (but undoubtedly planning it) crafty ant foes. But his strimmer broke on the concrete, and, after a moment's reflection, Ollie decided to co-operate with the ants, offering them sugar so they'd have no need to invade his house. The test was a failure – but Ollie had improved himself on his own initiative. Could the accumulation of game skills be rounding his character?

(Sizzle.) "Yarooo!" (Crackle.) "Yipes!"

TEST 15
SKILL
MORALITY

GAME
FINAL FANTASY III
Little had been done to address intellectual augmentation. Again using a saved position to concentrate on the relevant section, we directed Alison to practise at question-statement/response. In the game, you're led to choose between a fairly good way of life and a fairly bad one. (For example, should you rob a stunned bystander or help him up?) The standard wiring for this test was naturally disconnected. We would allow no judgmental electric shock to conveniently influence Alison's decisions.

REALITY
A victim was supplied. To emulate the game

TEST 14
SKILL
ATHLETICS

GAME
FLASHBACK
"Erk." Chris predictably had trouble mastering this famous rotoscoped space platformer – with the amount of control you have over Conrad, the joypad gymnastics are almost as difficult as those our hapless amnesiac student performs in the game. But Chris persevered, and by the end of his 10 minutes had conquered rolling, sidling with his gun drawn and jumping through space to grab a ledge.

REALITY
We would not have insulted Chris by demanding anything but his best, and led him to the 28-foot gap between buildings in the Future Publishing compound. (In fact the proportions were a little out; Chris had modestly longer to jump that Conrad would have had, but well within the experiment's projected margins of error.) Chris performed splendidly, aping Conrad down to the panicked body language on take-off.

conditions as closely as possible, a pair of judges drew Alison's attention to the possible responses. Alison's wily interpretation of the scene left the impressionable judges acting like scientific automatons. "Morality is a choice for the individual," said Alison. "Although it helps if you can intimidate someone by playing on their blind acceptance of authority as truth."

TEST 16

SKILL
IMPRESSING GIRLS

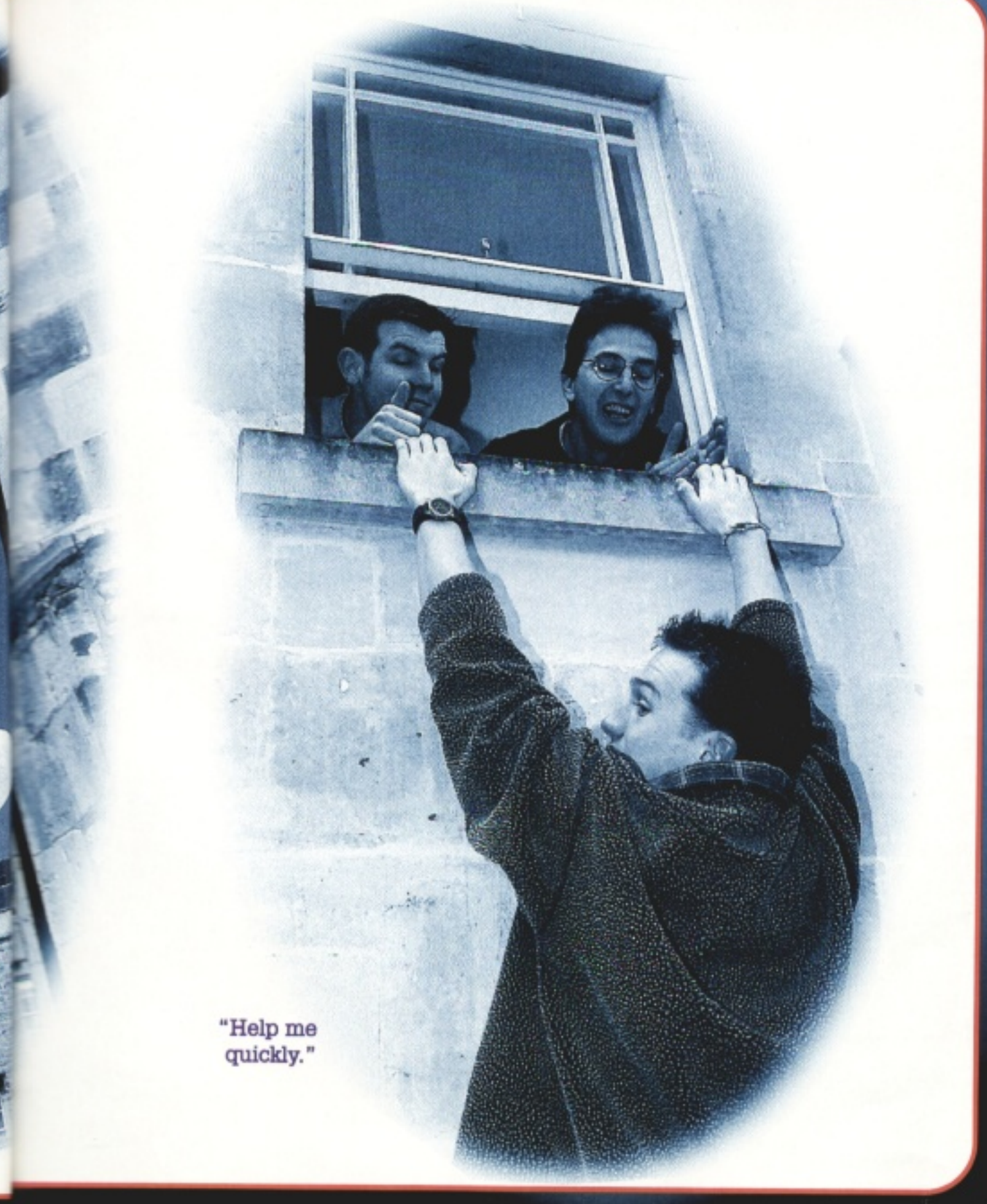
GAME
FINAL FIGHT

One thing all scrolling beat-'em-ups agree on is that thumping a long succession of evil heavies made your kidnapped girlfriend love you even more. Bill's electronic lesson was cursorily studied – he walked forwards, punching everybody with palpable disinterest. Soon he had reached the end (in just under 10 minutes, in fact). His electronic girlfriend fell into his arms. A fadeout showed them grinning like fools.

REALITY

Lisa agreed to help. She was not Bill's girlfriend (but, of course, would be willingly once he had freed her from her captors). The experiment was thwarted by a lack of evil villains. Even though the test was carried out at lunch time, when the maximum number of twisted businessmen would be abroad, no one attempted to kidnap Lisa.

A disaster.



CONCLUSION

And so the experiment has come to an end. The results – the stark, bare, nudey figures – are plain for all to see. We have succeeded. Even in times of great peril, we stuck with the exhaustive, only occasionally inhuman testing. We have gained some useful skills, true, but, vitally more importantly, we have come to know ourselves and so has become better people. No longer are we mere game reviewers, but rounded, personable, developed human beings, ready to take our place in society. It's all true – playing computer games can teach you valuable lessons about this crazy old merry-go-round we like to call Life.

Video games – we salute you.

Star KIRBY Super

Well, it's taken him long enough to get here. After numerous attempts at Game Boy supremacy and a nifty, if ultimately forgettable, golfing-come-*Marble Madness* outing in *Kirby's Tee-Shot*, the Mr Blobby™ of the video games world finally brings his own brand of suck and float platforming home to the SNES where it should have been all along.

But this is no mere rehash of past monochrome glories. Nintendo have given long-time Kirby collaborators Hal Laboratories a class A release-style 32Mbit to play around in and, thankfully, instead of packing them out with superfluous 'extras' they've managed to stuff no less than

More stars than *Rainbow Islands*? Kirby manages to out-cute even the *Bubble Bobble* series.

Japanese Release

Game: Star Kirby Super Deluxe
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Hal Laboratory
Price: ¥7500 (ask importer)
Release: Out now (Japan)
Players: 1 (two on reflex games)
Cart ROM: 32Mbit

Hello, little games player, would you like a nibble of my golden delicious? DeDeDe makes an offer you just can't refuse.

Suck: to draw into the mouth by creating a partial vacuum in the mouth. That's Kirby then.

KIRBY IN RENDERED OPENER SHOCK

And what an opener it is! A top combination of pre-rendered 3D and Mode 7 trickery gives *Kirby Super Deluxe* the best game intro we've seen in ages.

With The Spring Wind

More of an introductory level than a game. Loosely based on the first Game Boy title.

Crash Gourmet Race

Race against the diabolical DeDeDe over three courses picking up points winning tidbits.

Play To The Galaxy

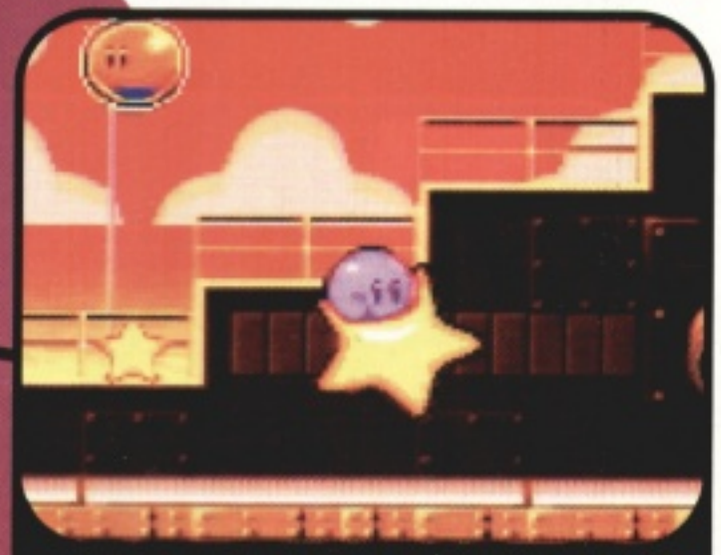
The final and toughest of the platformers has Kirby flitting around the galaxy.

White Wing Dyna Blade

Now we're into the game proper. Rescue the birdy chicks and... erm, well that's it really.

CHOOSE YOUR POISON

Star Kirby Super Deluxe consists of no less than eight different games to delight and entertain you. Bet you can't eat just one.

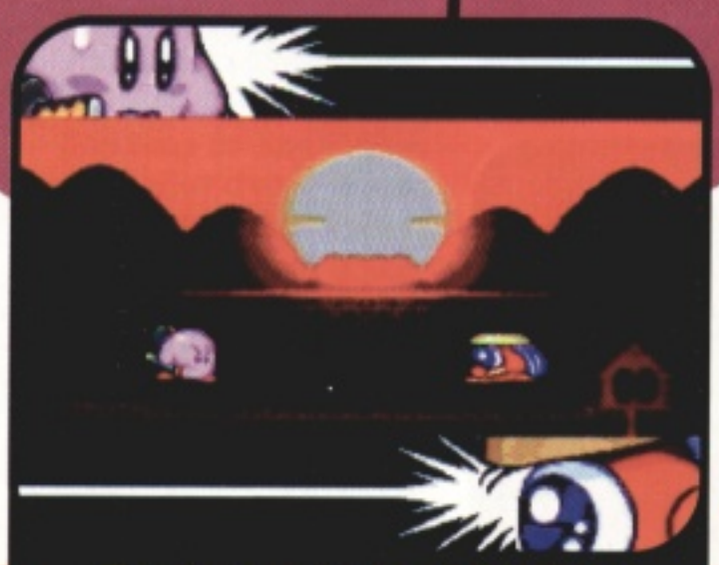


Revenge Of The Meta-knight

Kirby has to battle his way through a massive airship to reach the new batch of nasties.

Great Cave Project

This time the object is to collect all the treasure (and it's all numbered).



Setsuna no Mikiri*

Top reflex samurai duel action. When the signal appears, attack as quick as possible.

Megaton Punch

Timing is essential if you're going to win this block-smashing contest.

*Well, we couldn't translate it

Deluxe

SUCK KIRBY! SUCK LIKE LINDA LOVELACE!!

Should you be a Kirby virgin then there's one thing you should know about the pinkular rotund one. He sucks. But unlike the Game Boy suck and spit method of dispatching enemies in *Super Deluxe* he now swallows as well (ahem). This enables our blobular chum to absorb his foes' powers (and he gets to wear a nifty hat too). What's more, he can even spit his power back out to get a tagalong chum who fights for him.

Time for lunch. Kirby selects his victim and, rather disturbingly, sucks him right in.

A quick jab down on the pad and he absorbs his victim and takes on all their powers.

A tap of the A button turns the power into a computer controlled fighting buddy.

But, at any time, you can turn him back into an absorbable power again, ready to be sucked.

This means that you can have a powered up Kirby and a tagalong buddy at the same time. Nice.

Fire

Oh-so useful for setting off cannon fuses and other pyro-related antics.

Ice

Encase your foes in ice and send them on a one-way slide to oblivionsville. Cool.

Paint

The Homebase method of smart-bombing. A riot of colour. Groovy.

eight different games into *Star Kirby Super Deluxe*. Well, maybe 'different' isn't quite the right word, as all of the six main games are typical Kirby-style platformers (with two of them unselectable until you finish others) whilst the remaining two are cheeky little reflex sub-games.

To be honest, I've always found Kirby's outings on the Game Boy slightly lacking in challenge, and the fact that I finished the first two games on the cart in under half an hour only seemed to bear out my worries. Sure, there's loads to see with HAL cunningly integrating some rendered backgrounds into the proceedings, but with the Kirbster able to power up by eating nearly any nastie he comes across, you never seem to get those frantic moments when you've only one bar left on the ol' meter with not a replenishing goodie in sight. There's definitely a huge imbalance between Kirby's strength and any danger he faces. The different power-ups we've shown here are only tip of the iceberg. It's all too easy, at least in the initial games, to breeze through the, admittedly lovely, levels without so much as a sweaty thumb. The real clincher

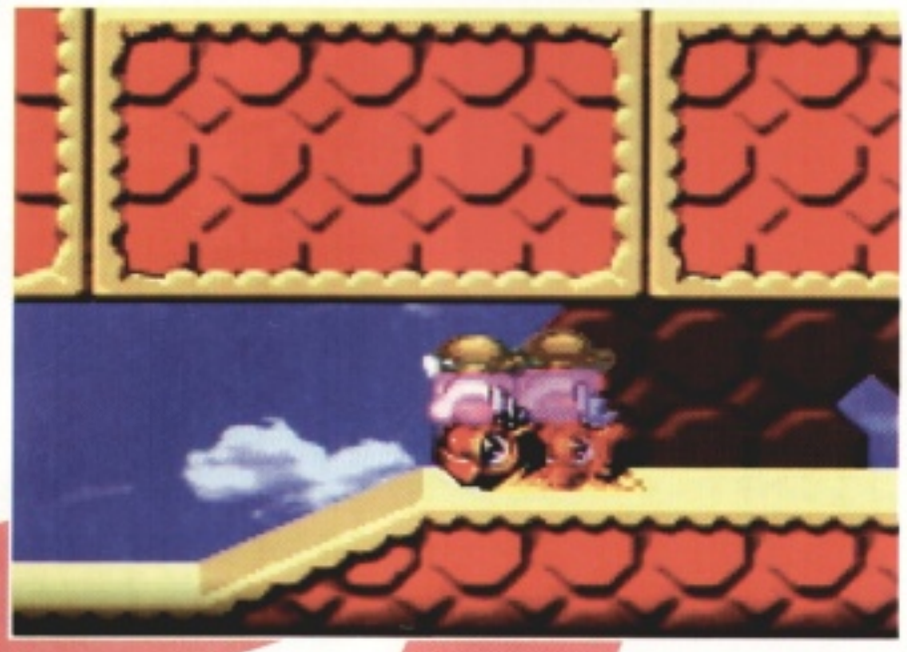
Ahhhhhh... Should you decide not to continue with any game the Kirbster gets gently put to bed. Ain't it sweet?

With The Spring Wind

Rather than the usual introductory level to get you used to Kirby's world, in *Super Deluxe*, you get a whole game. In truth, it shouldn't take you more than a quarter of an hour to complete – less if you're an old hand at Kirby – but it does sport that rather unnerving tree boss.

came when it turned out you could also have a computer controlled assistant to tag along and help out. What's the point of coming across the dreaded end-of-level boss if you can stand in a corner and let your lacky knock seven bells out of him? And if that isn't enough you're given a choice of power-ups for you and your buddy just before you get to meet him.

Thankfully, things do get better. Although it's possible to get through the treasure hunt game without collecting all the booty, the fact that it's all numbered does force you to hang around the levels that bit longer as well as giving it some replay value. The follow-up to *Dyna Blade* hauls Kirby into line with most other modern platformers in that its got some sort of storyline running through it, and the final game which has the squishy one flitting about from planet to themed planet raises the difficulty level to a more decent plateau. Alas, it's not hard to win the three course



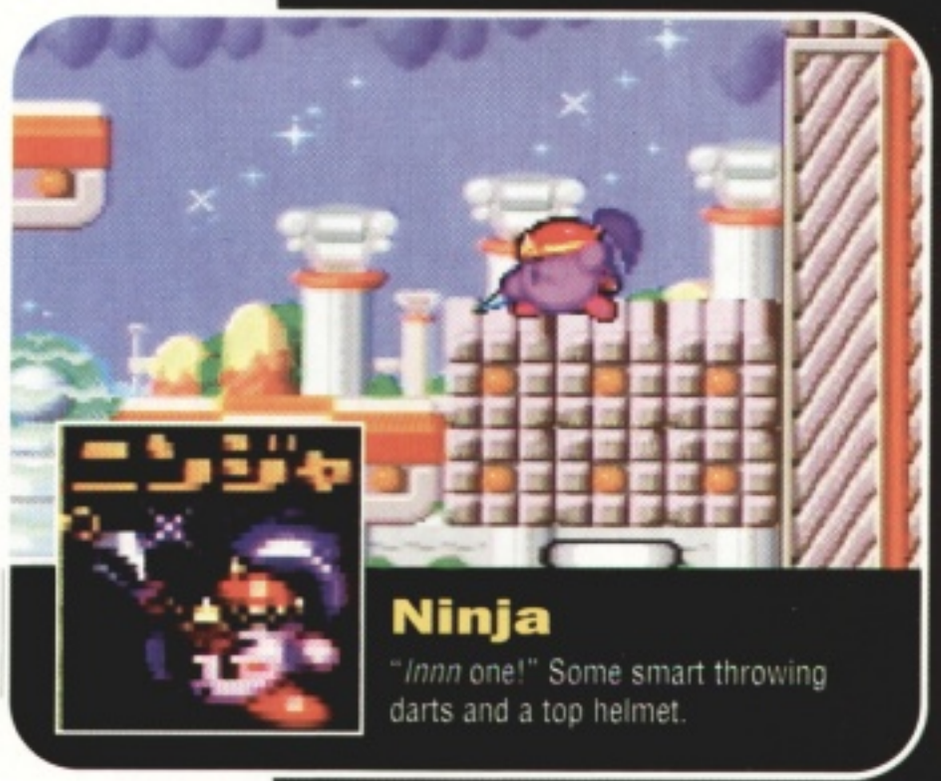
Kirby – born to ride...man.

Blimey, you've just found the triforce. Zelda also gets a nod elsewhere in the game.

Kirby's superstar lifestyle wasn't appreciated by his friends.

With more levels and a far more complicated layout, *Dyna Blade* builds on the first game. It's still fairly easy but there are enough new touches to keep it fresh. Standout moments are Kirby firing himself out of a cannon and a suprisingly nasty forced scrolling section.

White Wing Dyna Blade



Ninja

"*Innn* one!" Some smart throwing darts and a top helmet.

Jet

"Oh, I'm a rocket maaaaaaaan..." Avoid your enemies but not much else.

Parasol

Wield umbrella death like a bubblegum version of Gene Kelly.

Indian

Me Kirby-um. Attack with deadly feathers and hang by nipples on hooks.

Great Cave Project

There are 60 pieces of treasure for Kirby to collect here. Funnily enough, the game is actually harder when you have to hang around looking for stuff. A nice touch is that all the booty has its own little icon.

THE FAST SHOW

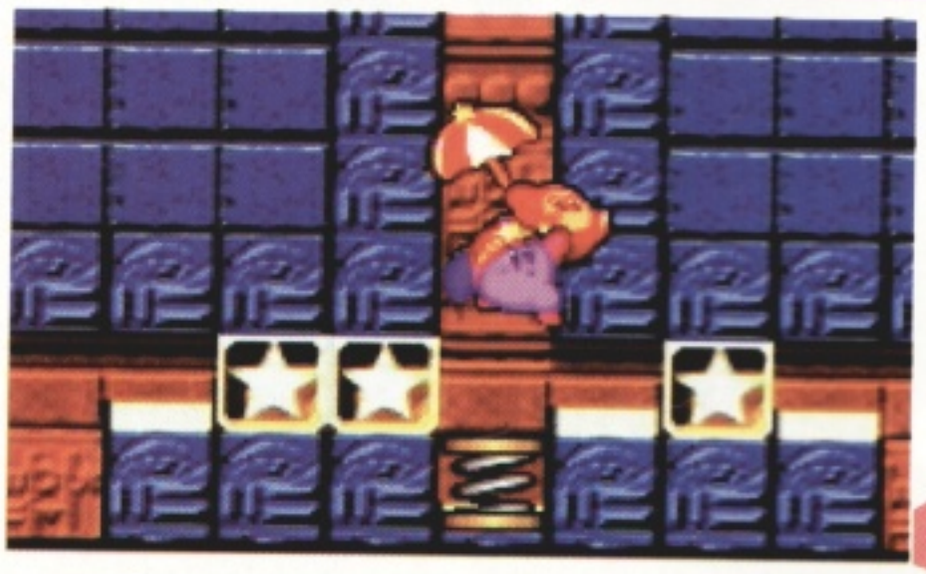
Alas, not where you attempt to find Kirby's washboard, but two reflex-testing sub-games that provide some light relief from the rigours of the main titles.

Megaton Punch

Kirby faces off against three opponents trying for the strongest punch using three different meters. Get it right and you could split the world.

Setsuna No Mikiri

A duel to the...er finish. Strike when the signal appears and your strike is timed. We couldn't get below 10.



To be honest, this is about as tricky as the puzzles get.

race against DeDeDe in *Crash Gourmet Race*, but individual course times stored on the battery back-up will ensure you return to it again and again while the duel and megaton punch are just great fun (and two player to boot).

Where Hal and Nintendo have scored with Kirby is that, in the great tradition of Ninty platformers, all the games are superbly playable. Control is responsive and intuitive to such an extent that you'll only need to refer to the copious amounts of on-screen instructions once, and the whole game is a joy to play. The sum is certainly greater than the parts with *Kirby Super Deluxe*. I'm resigned to the fact that games seem to be a lot easier these days, but Nintendo and HAL have crammed so much into *Kirby* that you don't really notice it's not the greatest challenge in the world. Too high a mark? What it boils down to is that *Star Kirby Super Deluxe* is an awful lot of fun, and surely at the end of the day that's what counts.

● **Wil Overton**

Crash Gourmet Race

A double-tap on the pad will send Kirby's little blobby feet a-scuttling and that's exactly what you'll need to do to beat DeDeDe in the three course Grand Prix. The first two courses are fairly straightforward, but the last is fairly torturous with you having to negotiate vertical passages and even water. Remember, it's not just the winning but also the collecting of the goodies that matters.

Revenge Of The Meta-knight

What is essentially *Dyna Blade 2* has Kirby up against a villainous mob of oddballs in charge of a giant flying warship. Rendered backgrounds come into the scene a lot more now, making this the most un-Kirby-like of all the games on the cart.

Bimu

Our cover Kirby complete with magic wand and dual bobbled hat. Tops.

Sword

Kirby or Link – you decide but our money's on some top in-joke action.

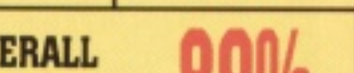
Blimey! Can you get away with a boss like this nowadays? Tut tut, Kirby.

Play To The Galaxy

By now you should know Kirby's deepest and innermost secrets. Here's a chance to put them all into practice, as, astride your star, you fly from planet to planet.

You can't actually access the last game until you've completed all the others. A cheap trick, maybe, but at least it keeps you playing.

Star Kirby Super Deluxe Nintendo



GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
88%	87%	91%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
85%		89%

VERDICT: Pretty much everything you'd expect *Kirby* on the SNES to be. Slick, colourful and addictive with a difficulty curve just the wrong side of easy. Ignore his distinct lack of street-cred and just enjoy another platform masterpiece, the like of which you won't find on any other platform – 16 or 32bit.

DO I KNOW YOU?

Super Mario

It's proof of Mario's simplicity, surely, that his transition from 2D to 3D has been so simple and uncontroversial? He's never had much character, in my opinion, but that makes it easier for him to show a range of basic emotions. Mostly pain, in this game.

Attack: The trusty barrel-smashing Mallet or a drop-kicked Koopa Shell.

Special: The old 'Fire Flower' bouncing fireball.

Victory Stance: A very Japanese 'V' sign, thrust skywards.

SUPER RPG

Japanese Release

Game: Super Mario RPG
Publisher: Nintendo (Japan)
Developer: Square Soft (Japan)
Price: ¥7500 (ask importer)
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 32Mbit + BB

"Why, an eight year old child could understand this. (Quick, rush out and find me an eight year old child)."

Ah, it's the Killer Clowns from outta – em.. er... So, *SMRPG* boasts new enemies as well as old, then?

Riding the waterfall: use mini Mario's limited swimming power to collect coins and find caves.

When somebody asks: "Do you want the good news, or the bad news?", the qualified cynic sits back in the chair and prepares for the iceberg of Badness sitting just below the tip of the Good. Comfy?

The good news is that *Super Mario RPG* fulfills most of its designers' ambitions.

The bad news? It isn't supposed to be played and enjoyed by people like me. If our market research is to be trusted, it isn't meant for the likes of you, the average *Super Play* reader, either. This is an entry level RPG, aimed at young Japanese children, with the specific purpose of introducing them to the genre of turn-based menu-driven roleplaying games that their

On days like these, you really have to consider if going out with royalty is worth all the attention.

teenage brothers and sisters rave about.

Whenever interviewed, Mario's creator Shigeru Miyamoto always stresses his belief in simple games that cater for all ages, abilities and skill levels. They're easy to grasp from the outset, you pretty much learn at your own pace, and if you're a talented player then you'll recognise and master a few advanced tricks, perhaps even

Mallow

Looking like a pale relative of Kirby, Mallow signs up when Mario helps him track down a crocodile in a top hat. The chase culminates in a mine beneath the village of the moles... I can't believe I'm writing this.
Attack: A clash of Cymbals.
Special: Mallow's lightning bolt is one of the pitifully few spells to affect a whole group of enemies. Needless to say, it's way over the top.
Victory Stance: With hands somewhat devoid of fingers, it has to be another V-sign.

Geno

This toy-who-comes-to-life is a bit disturbing. Indeed, we're worried that he might be responsible for nightmares.
Attack: A catapult/pea-shooter attachment to his hand.
Special: A wand emitting DBZ-strength energy bolts. You can whack the buttons to improve the power of the attack.
Victory stance: Crosses his spindly man-made arms, smugly.

MARIO

find the secret areas that evade many others. This tenet has made Nintendo games popular worldwide: it's why people who started playing them ten years ago – despite having discovered all the perils and pleasures of adult life along the way – are still looking forward to the next wave of 64-bit Nintendo gaming. It also explains why many of us might have been expecting a new SNES *Mario* game we could all enjoy.

This universality isn't so easy to achieve in a roleplaying format, unfortunately, but rather than compromise, Square's developers have consciously decided to make 'My First RPG' for a specific audience. If you waved goodbye to puberty long ago, now is the time to accept disappointment and get it out of the way. You will find the combat system shallow, the puzzles simplistic, the action sequences slight and the challenge non-existent.

Sorry. It's a shame for us old gimmers because, taken on its own terms, *SMRPG* is actually a neat little game.

So what do you get? Well, the isometric sequences can hardly be described as 3D Mario World. They're very short, very fast, and it's impossible to 'die' in them. Get crushed by a Thwomp or frazzled by a flame and you're just knocked backwards,

Have you ever seen anything like this village of Mushroom People? Eat your heart out, 32-bits.

Game characters are bound by law to foolishly jump in any dodgy old mine cart they find, I reckon.

King Koopa

Bowser, to you and me. Surprisingly, the horned one turns out to be on your side: he joins forces with Mario when Princess Peach is kidnapped from HIM by a Wario-esque fellow in need of an orthodontist. Oh, and he's lost his castle too. No wonder he blubs gallons.

Attack: Ball and Chain.

Special: Summons a Big Boo.

Victory stance: He, em, grips one arm with the other and raises a fist. We always thought that was supposed to be rude. On the continent, possibly.

Princess Peach

Daisy, to you and me. Just to prove that you can't leave her alone for a second, she gets kidnapped TWICE. Normally, I'd accuse the writers of perpetrating a foul cliche, but on this occasion I reckon it's a bit of an in-joke.

Attack: a slap back and forth across the chops.

Special: Er, she causes a sheep to fall on her enemy from a great height. No, I'm not making this up.

Victory stance:: A Mario V-sign, but somehow much cheekier.

ready for another attempt. Even if you bump into a Goomba, it's not the end: this is the moment when you zip to a separate battle

Spotting old enemies updated is one of the highlights. These Chain Chomps aren't hard to dodge, though.

screen to engage in some menu-driven combat. Upon winning the fight you're returned to your original place in the isometric action scene, now minus one Goomba, and allowed to continue. If there is a death sequence, I don't think I ever saw it.

The plot? About as complicated as *Super Mario Bros 3*, if you catch my drift. You're given the world map from the start, and progress is extremely linear. Even though I was playing a Japanese version, I never found myself wondering what to do next.

It's impossible to weigh up this game's merits without considering the pre-rendered graphics. They're not ground-breaking any more, true, but using them in this isometric fashion does give *SMRPG* an original and endearing feel. Barring a few unwelcome additions, the sprite designs also manage to capture the character of Miyamoto's creations. It doesn't always pay off: repeated items of 'furniture' like palm trees and rocks show up as such when dropped on a flat green textureless plane, and some of the renders are plain scruffy when measured against the impeccable visual standards of a Rare Design game like *DKC* or *KI*. *SMRPG* also suffers the perennial isometric 'optical illusion' problem – it's not always easy to tell where platforms and treasure chests suspended in the air are supposed to be.

Nevertheless, I think it's a success. There's very little repetition outside of the fight scenes, so you always have the adventure of exploring something new. The diversity of playing styles will captivate even the shortest of attention spans, and the whole affair is suffused with an agreeable sense of humour.

I'll be interested to see how it sells – and how it's sold – when a Western translation appears later this year. I'll stress again that *SMRPG* is intended purely for younger players, and because it lacks the universal appeal of other *Mario* titles I'm not going to award it a rave score that might encourage our older readers to expect great things. If I was reviewing this game for an education supplement, rather than *Super Play*, it might well be a ninety percenter. You see my reviewer's dilemma, I hope?

● **Zy Nicholson**

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A BONUS!

A *Mario* title just wouldn't feel complete without some little sub-games to earn you extra pointage, and *SMRPG* is filled to bursting with them. One minute you're jumping across musical tadpoles to play a tune, the next you're rolling down a river on a barrel trying to collect coins. It's all great fun, and at the same time you wonder if you aren't being tested on your intelligence, memory, patience, even sense of rhythm. Given the nature of the title, that's perfectly feasible.

It's 'Bash the Mole' – except Mario is the soft foam hammer.

Below: play a tadpole tune to inspire an artist.

Left: spur on your Yoshi by tapping out the rhythm of the race music.

Wiggler's Forest sums up the game's two styles. Jump on his head and you'll rack up coins, but touch him elsewhere and your party fights him on the battle screen (inset).

Wil says...

Ummm... Square. The prospect of another game from the once Ninty-loyal RPGmeisters doesn't generate quite the same excitement as it used to, does it? So, did they have a ruck with Nintendo and rush to finish off *Super Mario RPG* so they could get on with *FFVII*?

The essential world map. If you can't guess where the bad guy lives, give up now.

I would put Peach in my party, but I'm scared she'll be captured again. Best stick with 'Gripper' Koopa and his fighting prowess.

More hit points, a stronger attack, or special powers? Even levelling up gives you things to do.

Mario takes a brief step back in time, bleepy theme tune and all, to rub it in.

Early in the game, you discover that everything in the isometric environment is 'solid': you can even stand on this mushroom geezer's head, and nobody seems to mind.

Then you come across this little chap, running round and round at top speed while his mum is busy tending the bushes. For a laugh, you try to hitch a lift on his head too.

But aha! The programmers had anticipated such hi-jinx, and before you know it Mario's sent spinning like a dizzy thing . You can't say you were expecting that.

On first glances I wasn't too impressed. Much of the rendering is sub-Rare standard and could certainly have done with a bit of touching up by hand, and the battles were incredibly easy. But some five hours later I was still playing. Not because of some amazing and challenging gameplay, but merely to see what totally bizarre situations and ingenious touches the Square/Nintendo team could come up with next. Be it waking up next to Link at an Inn (complete with *Zelda* sound effects), having to hide behind curtains to avoid discovery whilst the baddies make their nefarious plans, whistling the original *Mario Bros* theme in the shower or playing with a mushroom kiddie and his Mario toys (and losing to King Koopa!), it's these flashes of brilliance and humour that really hold your attention, and it's fortunate that *Super Mario RPG* is stuffed full of them. It's as if the game has been put together by a team of die-hard *Mario* fans who have anticipated all the sort of things that other *Mario* fans playing would get a kick out of seeing.

Yes, it is far too easy (be warned if you're intending to play the Japanese version though, as you will need to note down some text), and, compared to 'proper' RPGs, it's way too shallow. But if THE take a leaf out of Nintendo's Japanese pricing structure (SMRPG is ¥7500 rather than the usual ¥11400 a 32Mbit title goes for) I'm sure that *Super Mario RPG* will keep you entertained (if not particularly challenged) enough to justify its purchase.

Everyone tried to kiss Peach but she dodged, and... well, I think it's easy to translate.

"So, what makes you think Mario is hiding behind the curtains?"

SUPER MARIO RPG Nintendo

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90%	86%	80%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	81%
50%		

VERDICT:A short, cute and extremely simplistic introduction to roleplaying by Nintendo's most famous character. Buy the translation for a younger relative and look over their shoulder to see the wacky bits.

COLLEGE SLAM

As with *NBA Jam*, you dunk the flaming ball to the sound of "he's on fire!" But where's the old "boomshakalaka?"

Is College Slam merely a new flavour of NBA Jam or a different conserve altogether?

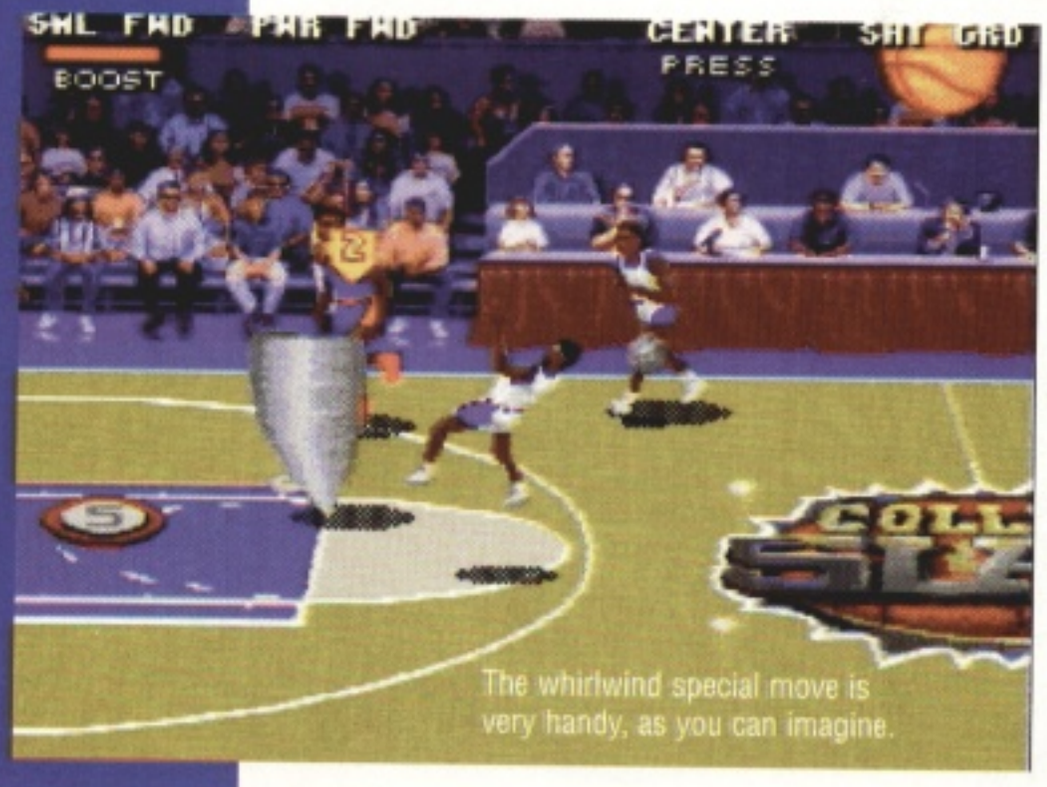
The animation is as good as it ever was, but with more variety.

Okay, before you say it, yes, this is an *NBA Jam* clone. In fact, it has an almost identical game engine and is also from Acclaim – it's gonna be a similar game, that's a given. The big question is whether *College Slam* improves on its predecessor or is just another example of a developer trying to cash-in on past SNES glory without having to put any effort in. The answer, my *SPLAY* reading chums, is what we're here for...

I've said it before and I'll say it again, straight basketball has no business being converted into a videogame. Why? Because it's such a negative and unevenly paced sport. Rather than getting pleasure from scoring baskets (you're expected to succeed every time) your aim is to block the opponent! What fun is that? You're more likely to get angry at a miss than pleasure from a basket. And besides, there's no real excitement until the last quarter of the game, anyway. All very odd. The solution? An arcade conversion that takes all the best bits from the sport and exaggerates on them? That's what *NBA Jam* was all about. But two years later something with a bit more ooomph is needed to re-ignite the genre. Enter *College Slam*...

The action is still two-on-two with the option of one to four players (multitap needed). Also the new Jam commentator (as far as we could fathom) is still earning a crust by proclaiming: "He's on fire!" In so many respects this is the same game, but three important elements remove it... Obviously the nature of the teams has changed, but, to be honest, it doesn't really make a great deal of difference whether you're playing as the New York Knicks or the Ohio State Buckeyes – and if you haven't got a clue what I'm talking about, I rest my case.

The main improvement is the option to have *ker-aaazy* icons scattered around the court. These take the game far beyond what seemed to be zany antics in *NBA Jam* and its sequel. You can now, by just walking over them, become invisible, transform into a whirlwind,

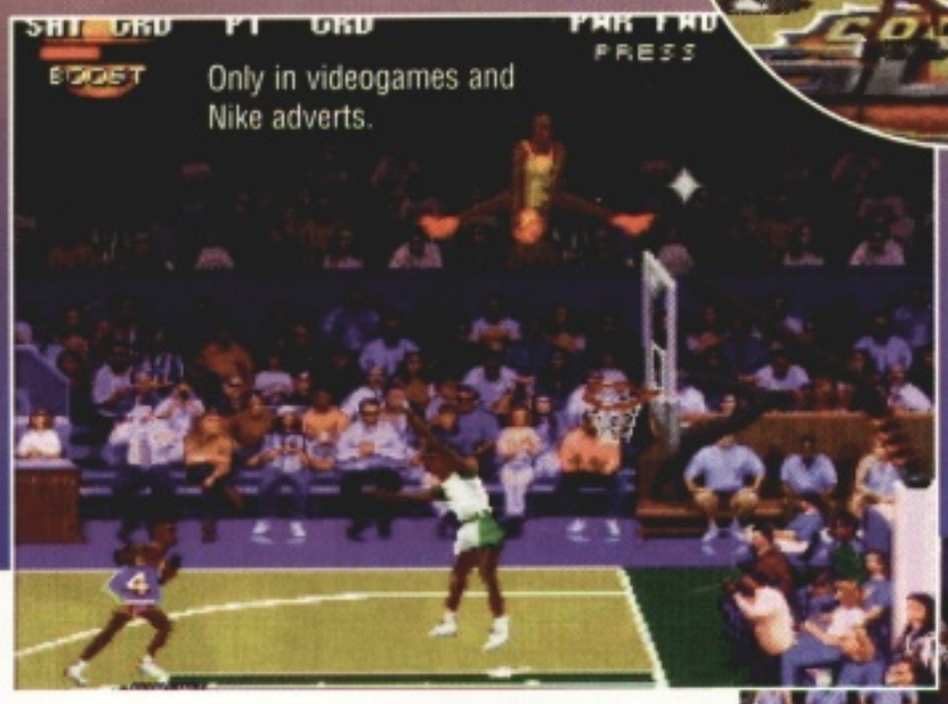


The whirlwind special move is very handy, as you can imagine.

AM

US Release

Game: College Slam
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Iguana
Price: Check with importer
Release: Out now
Players: 1 to 4
Cart ROM: 24 Mbits



Unlikely to receive a release over here – shame that.

Another invisible player. And this time you can see his shadow!

perform monster jams from anywhere on the court, oh the list goes on (see Anything You Can Do… box). This certainly saves the game in terms of gamelife and takes the already tip-top gameplay to new heights.

The other nice addition is the ability to customise team names and statistics. It's something that should have been added to the genre a long time ago and it's such a simple thing, yet *so* childishly satisfying when you see yourself perform a particularly harsh tackle or score from down court.

As always the gameplay is impeccable, if a little simplistic, which is to be expected, as Acclaim would have been utter fools to mess with the oh-so-intuitive control system.

Gripes then. Well, after two years, it simply hasn't progressed *enough* to earn a startling score. Especially when you consider that the original *Jam* can now be picked up in bargain bins for less than £20. Also, some American publications have dismissed *College Slam* on account of some of the uniform colours being completely wrong (Illinois don't wear white and blue). Get a life! And besides, we don't care about such pedantry on this side of the Atlantic,. Well, as long as the sport in question isn't one of ours. This argument is falling apart rapidly – cue next paragraph…

Overall, although only a slight improvement on the *Jam* series (and a debatable one at that, depending on your feelings for known players and their statistics), *College Slam* is better than the spate of 'serious' basketball titles released by the likes of EA, but it just hasn't got that all important spark of originality to arouse gamesplayers sufficiently. Hence the score.

● **Sean Atkins**

COLLEGE SLAM
Acclaim

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
79%	76%	80%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	79%
80%		

VERDICT: It's a cliché, but if you already own one of the *NBA Jam* titles you'd be advised not to consider this. If not, then in gameplay terms *College Slam* certainly improves on the *Jam* formula, but suffers from the lack of recognisable faces on court. Then again, how many basketball players can you name? Bonkers and far too addictive in multi-player mode, but hardly original.

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO ICON DO BETTER!

The major thing going for *College Slam* over the likes of *NBA Jam* is the option to make the game even more bonkers than it already is – if that's the kind of mood you're in. Turn on 'icons' and the court turns into a hectic whirlwind-filled, lightning fraught, invisible player ridden madhouse. And that's just for starters. Check out the following icons that you merely have to make contact with…

- **F** Increases your ability to make the three-point outside shot.
- **D** Allows you to perform Monster Jams from anywhere on the court.
- **S** Increases your overall speed to stupid levels.
- **P** Increases your power to stupid levels.
- **T** Gives unlimited boost action temporarily.
- **F** Sets you "on fire" temporarily.
- **B** This bomb knock everyone on the court over, except you.
- **?** Randomly activates one of the other icons.
- **R** Reverses the direction of the ball in mid- shot.
- **Z** Causes a bolt of lightning to zap your opponents' basket and destroy it.
- **I** Makes your team-mate temporarily invisible.
- **C** Causes the ball to chaotically bounce all over the gaff.
- **W** Transforms you into a whirlwind that knocks over any player in your path.

Order Assign List Mil. Op Info Assets Option
12/ 8/1941 Japan Move Phase
Move Phase
Move phases are cunningly preceded by the aptly named Plan phases.
Fleet Subs
Marine Enemy

US Release

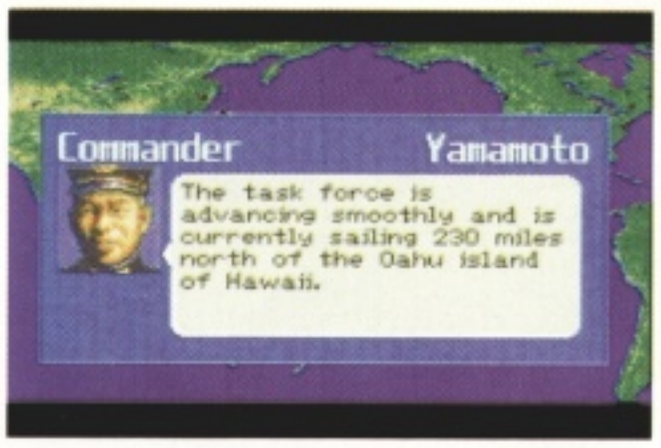
Game: P.T.O.II
Publisher: Koei
Developer: Koei
Price: Check with importer
Release: Out now
Players: 1 to 2
Cart ROM: 24 Mbits

The visuals of DKC2, the animation of Earthworm Jim, the playability of Yoshi's Island. Good, weren't they? Now, where were we... Oh yes, prepare to go comatose.

Koei is the company bringing us this sequel. They are also the undisputed kings of the Super NES wargame. However, it's not that tricky to be king in a kingdom with a population of one. You see, Koei are the only people who can be bothered to make wargames for the SNES, and have built up quite a loyal base of fans on the strength of it. The surprising thing is that most of their games are particularly awful.

P.T.O. II (and, yes, we've already cracked the Please Turn Over II joke) continues their reign of supremacy over this much neglected genre and goodness, they've really surpassed themselves this time. The latter part of World War II was, to understate the situation, a right nightmare. It was towards the end that the Americans got involved, and, as we all know, it ended with an almighty ruck in the Pacific between the Japanese and the Yanks. This flurry of destructive activity forms the basis for the ten scenarios contained in this cart. However, explosive though the material is, Koei haven't really managed to work it into a form that even remotely excites.

A major part of the problem is that it's so bloody unfriendly to use. I think the developers probably have a motto, and that motto is, "You can't have too many menu options." For example, when issuing orders during your move phase there's a screen for almost every decision you make, with each of these screens being chocka with statistics, very few of which you ever need to look at. Once you've chosen your orders, you have to click the send option to send the orders. Why? Why not just pick a fleet, pick some orders, and click okay all on one screen? I'm sure one of the more anally retentive members of the development team


Commander Yamamoto
The task force is advancing smoothly and is currently sailing 230 miles north of the Oahu island of Hawaii.

That's your commander, that is. And he wants the moon on a stick.

P.T.O. II
PACIFIC THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

ACTION STATIONS!

Don't, whatever you do, choose the option to watch the battles in *P.T.O.II*. There are two very good reasons for this. The first is they can take ages to run through and there's no opportunity to skip them. Second, they're rubbish. Take a look at this lot.

You're under attack. There's your gun and the enemy planes are swooping in. A bit sad, isn't it? It's even worse when you consider that these static screenshots aren't very much less animated than the real thing when it's in full flow.

would have you believe that the complexity of the game engine dictates this minefield of options, but don't believe a word of it. The bottom line is that the user interface in the game stinks to high heaven.

Still, at least there's plenty of action in there... Doh! They've forgotten the action. (Assume nasal, anorak-y voice with a hint of indignation.) "Oh dear me, no, action is all very well for the less cerebrally challenging games, but wargaming at its purest level represents one of the most mentally taxing, yet at the same time, thrilling pastimes you can take part in. In fact, due to the gradual development of a campaign and the constant requirements of the player to be able to successfully manipulate small units while still maintaining a consistent strategy, I think you'll find, young man, that far from being a tragic omission, the absence of action is, on this occasion, a positive bonus."

So speaks a wargamer. At *Super Play* we say, "Cobblers!" Sure, we're not denying the obvious attractions of a well executed, historically accurate wargame, with or without realtime, in-yer-face action sequences. But *P.T.O. II* actually gives you the option to watch the battles, then delivers them in the most lacklustre, halfassed, laughable format you've ever seen. For more info on this pitiful section of the game, see our "Action Stations!" box.

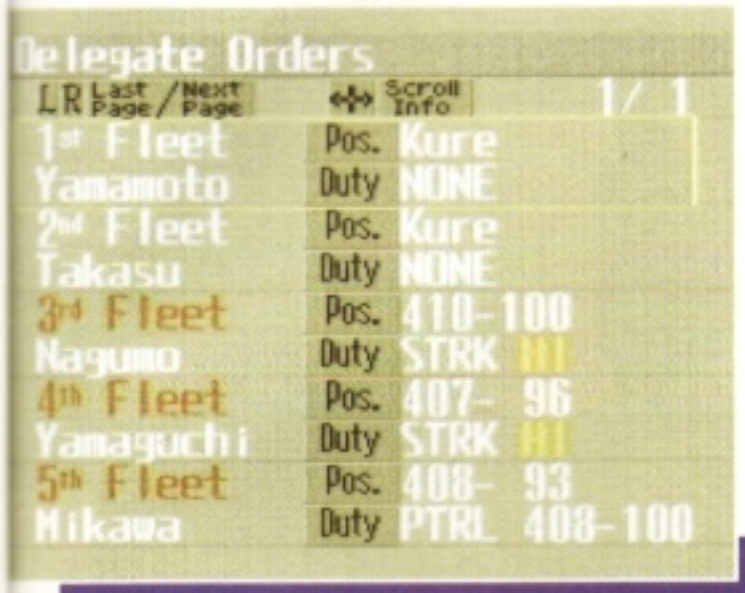
As for the gameplay, it seems to be fine down there in amongst all the shrapnel of this bomb-site of a game. In fact, I'm sure there are all sorts of clever strategic 'nuances' to the gameplay. Sadly, they escape me. But no matter. In closing, it has struck me that instead of actually reviewing the game we should maybe have printed, in tiny little letters, a message across the bottom of one of the pages saying "Pssst... Wargamers! Koei have released another one." That way we could have kept the Koei fans happy and saved some space for one or two proper videogames.

● Andy Dyer

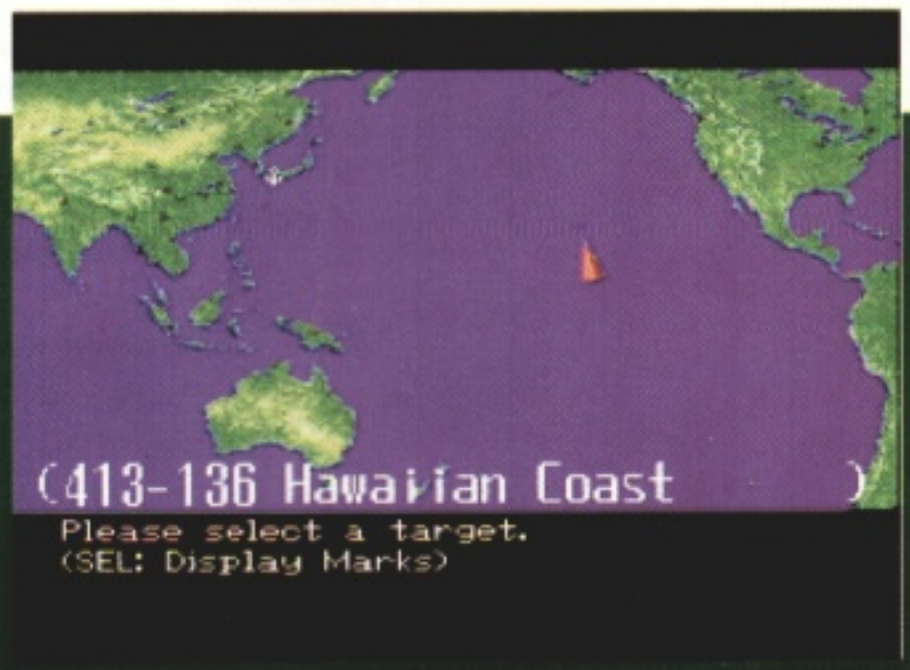
P.T.O.II
Koei

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
28%	33%	20%
GAMELIFE	**OVERALL SCORE:**	
60%	25%	

VERDICT: Nice for Koei employees, I'm sure, but for any gameplayer with an ounce of taste this represents a real trough in Super NES entertainment. They've taken one of the most interesting episodes of history and made it slightly less interesting than sorting out tax returns.



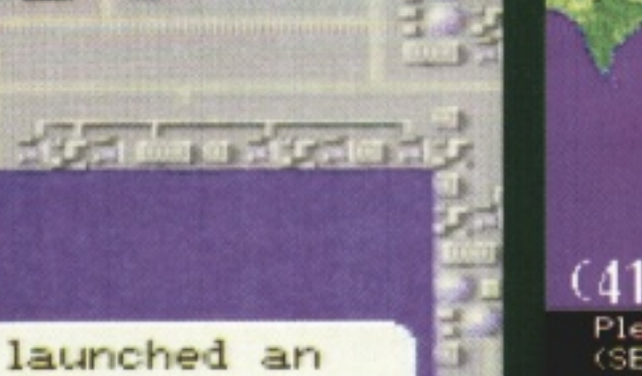
You'll no doubt be aching to feast your eyes on this screen – it's your fleet league table. Useful.



Somehow, if an enemy airstrike were approaching, the command of "Duck" might be more appropriate.

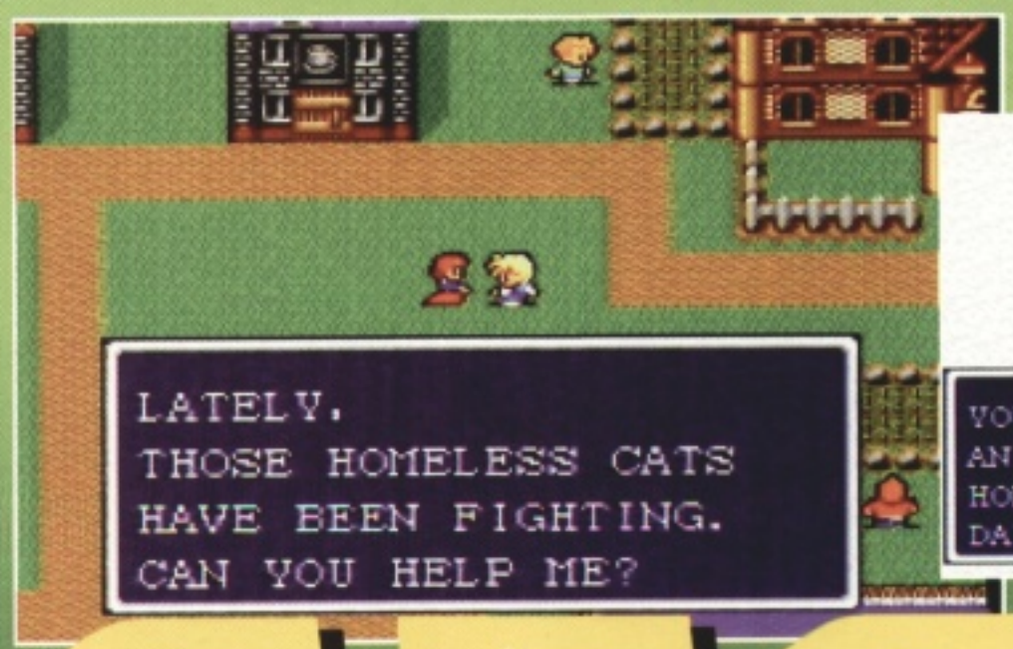
Such paper aeroplanes are useless in the fight against greater forces of destruction. Oh, I see, it's your cursor.

This is you attacking the US fleet. The planes fly over in a tawdry little loop of animation which, it has to be said, isn't very much better than the animation found on those dreadful old LCD Game And Watch games.

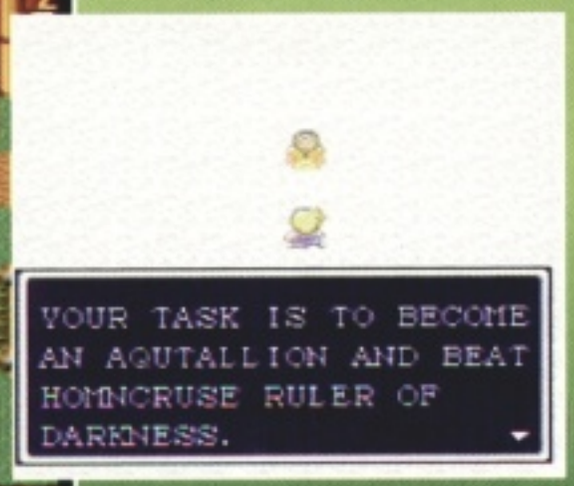


The stunning split-screen sub attack screen. A torpedo dribbles out of the sub and disappears off the right side of the screen. Then it reappears in the top section and stutters towards the ship. Very poor.

Ha, ha, haaaa... this is the best bit. The ground forces engage in a truly devastating exchange of destructive firepower. Or do they just stand there dead still while the tips of their guns flash a little bit?



Left: Now, I've seen some dramatic plotlines in my time, but this...



Above: What a bugger. I played the game for hours before I twigged.

Left: This is more like it. Can I get a pointy hat too please?

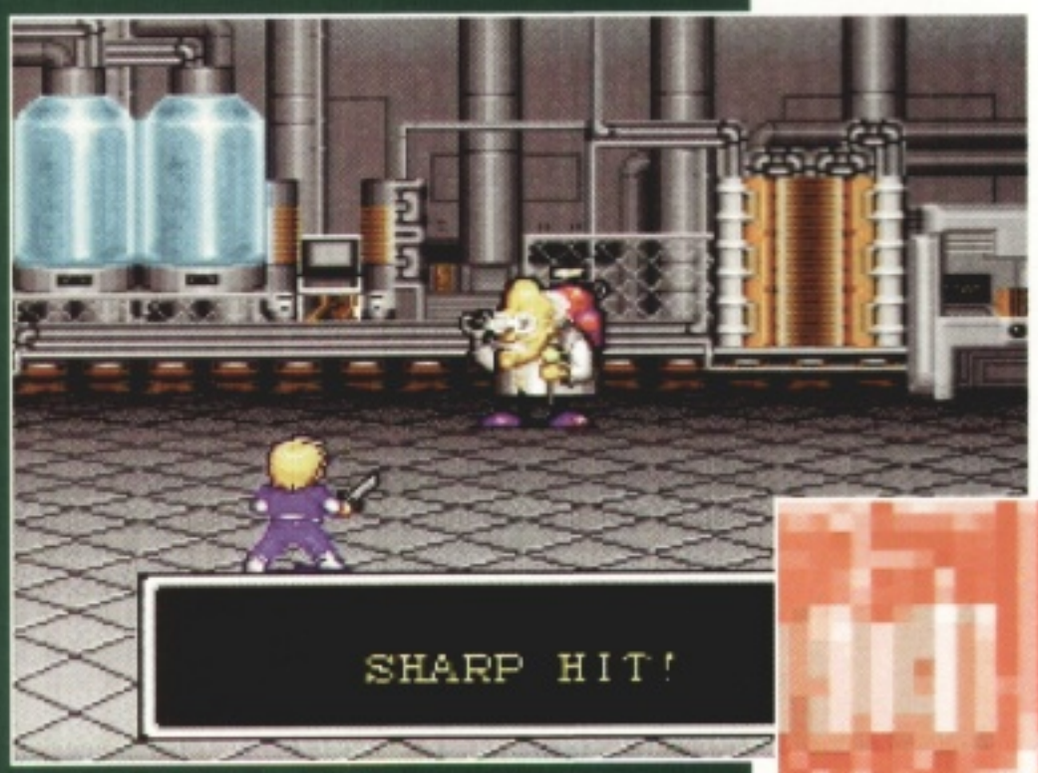
SECRET OF THE

US Release

Game: Secret Of The Stars
Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: In-house (Japan)
Price: Check with your importer
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 12Mbit

Tecmo, whose American football sims inspire the sort fanaticism you'd expect to see at a Take That concert, have, for some reason stepped out from stadiums into the kingdom of RPGs. What inspired them to do so is beyond me... Their new-boy status is apparent from the off – they've even gone to the trouble of subtitling the cart 'A Fantasy' (just in case you risk taking it too seriously), but they've also gone to the trouble of carefully creating yet another bleedin' RPG where intelligent conversation, sparkling repartee and even good, honest, English coherency are but the stuff of an eloquent madman's dreams.

Cat Boo's English correspondence course had yet to show any real results.



Your first real task as a young adventurer is not to doff some mean monster but a lonely old man.

Arrrrrgh! The old buzzard has struck first with that well known old person's ailment.

Luckily for me, a packet of Swan Vestas I kept for just such an emergency proves Dr Gari's undoing.

starts his adventure (but remember – it's just 'A Fantasy').

Cleverly sidestepping the obvious problems this so casually vomits up, the programmers at Tecmo decided to rush as much information into your face at once as they could. You begin in a village. As usual. There are many people around. As usual. You talk to them. As usual. And then you prepare to be faced with perhaps the most unsubtle 'clues' known to man. People you meet, without seeming to realise it, hand you real gems of information: "What have you heard about Homncruse? I have heard he is an evil monster who is trying to rule our world." or "I am very proud of Mrs Sonia, because she looked after you when your parents passed away." These are not the random, everyday comments of random, everyday civilians. They know something I don't, and it scares me.

Feeling immediately pressurised into committing every seemingly throwaway detail to memory, then, you begin on your travels. 'You', by the way, are a child. A child who must "seek more than just answers". You must "meet and unite in friendship with other young warriors. Together, these children will establish their own identity. With it, they

So: your little waddling duck man with the blond mop of oh-so-tussleable hair, and the looks of a dopey, doped-up two year old

Left: They may look fearsome, but they sure don't move much.

Left: You were told that this was a mystic mountain which no-one had dared climb in ages but somehow...

Below: So, this Badbad? Do I take it he's some sort of local villain then?

Go forth, young hero, and save the kingdom of Middleearthtypesleepyhamlet from the evil clutches of Nastydemonwithanattitude... again.

STARS

will have to establish a new world, and a new generation of peace." I'd have just played Hide 'n' Seek, or something.

And so let me get to my point. This is all very well and good – if only you hadn't trodden virtually the same path many a time before. See, RPGs need something to make 'em stand out. Something that makes them different. If walking from village to village before finally venturing out into the monster-rich mountains and fighting bits of slime or weird guardian skeleton things or bizarre green blokes with axes time and time again is something which, to you, seems fresh and new, then great.

Secret of the Stars is a fair enough RPG... it's just that if you're the kind of *Super Play* reader who knows exactly which orb goes with which special magic quiff of Endor in which order on which day of the year you happen to be playing... then you're experienced enough to know that behind every good RPG, there's a throng of wannabe betters, bathing in their own juice of mediocrity. *Secret of the Stars* is one such bathing beauty... and the catchy slogan currently used to promote it? "It's Tecmo, it's *Secret of the Stars*, it's a whole new ball game!". Let it be know that they speak no truth.

● Danny Wallace

ROUND HERE, THAT'S FIGHTIN' TALK

Hoorah for random battle encounters and turn-based fights, we cry. Hoorah for unimaginative static graphics that instill combat with not the merest hint of drama. Hoorah for an automatic setting that means you can go and make a cuppa while the game plays itself, thus rendering it totally pointless. And a special hoorah for translators who don't program in proper plurals. 'Attacked by two Pig Man's' indeed.

Above: *Secret Of The Stars*' rather lacklustre menu system may offer the basics needed for console-style turn based combat but leaves little to be desired in the design department.

Right: We want to *see* that 13HP of damage you just dished out to Red Slime, not just be told about it!

SECRET OF THE STARS Tecmo

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
35%	40%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	43%
50%		

VERDICT: Hummm... mediocre. Don't be fooled into thinking that just because *Final Fantasy* got you interested in RPGs that they're all that good. This is a bog-standard Japanese style RPG that only die-hard fanatics will get anything out of.

Donkey Kong Country 2:

Diddy Kong's Quest

Part 1

We've pulled out all the stops to bring you the most detailed guide to *DKC2* you're ever going to find. Part one this month, part two the next. Got it? Good.

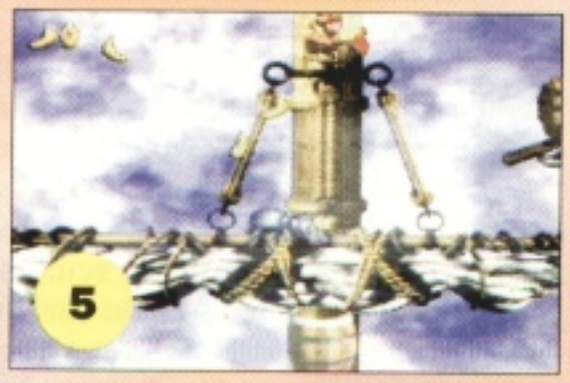
Gangplank Galleon

Pirate Panic

Firstly, there's an invisible Barrel Kannon above the left-most point of the level (1). You'll need to do a team-up jump to reveal it. You can then go back left and through that door for an extra life. Later on, jump down in the gap in the ship and head right to find another Barrel Kannon, which fires you into an 'N' and transports you to a bonus game (2). Another Kremkoin is up for grabs left of the arrow of bananas pointing to a locked door (3). Use Rambi's special attack (hold A) to smash it down and play a second bonus game. Finally there's a DK Coin at the top of a pile of barrels (4). Easy, eh?

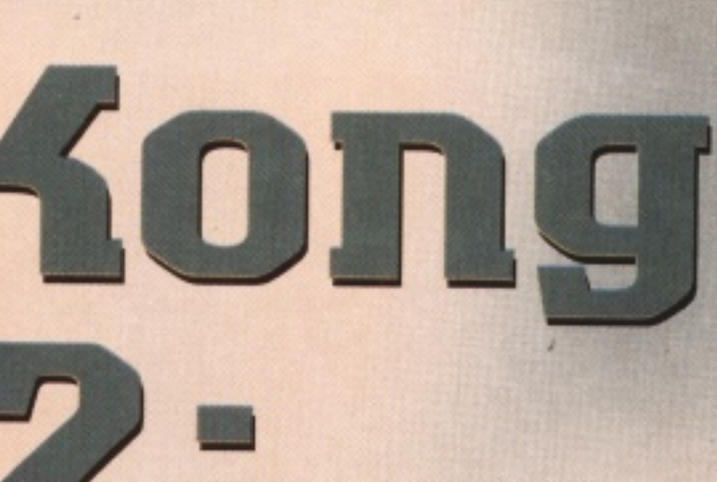
Mainbrace Mayhem

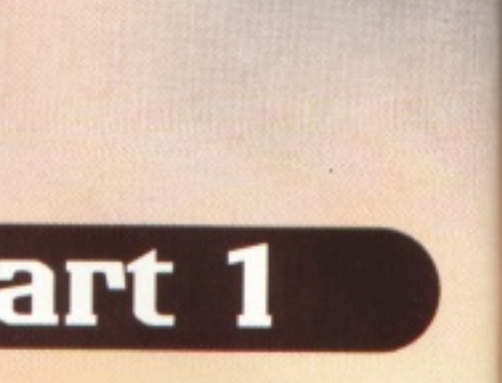
There's an invisible warp barrel, which will take you to much later in the level, below your start point. Jump right with Dixie's helicopter spin and then float left under the first sail (5). Alternatively keep helicoptering right to find a bonus level where you can earn a Kremkoin (6). Pop that Kannon ball after the continue barrel into the Kannon a little further left for another bonus game. After the first vertical climb past the continue barrel, jump up to a single banana on the mast. It's an invisible hook. Now jump left for a green extra life balloon (7). There's yet another bonus game to play if you helicopter jump down onto the sail above the Kannon. Just look to your left. There's a DK Coin too (8). Right above the end target. You can't miss it.



Gang Plank Galley

Climb the barrels at the level's start for a bonus game (9). From this vantage point, perform Dixie's helicopter jump or a team-up throw right, to land on a hook. Now jump right to another hook where you'll find a DK Coin. After the '!' barrel, and you're invincible, climb to the top of the barrel stack a few screens right, 'cos there's an extra life on the way up and a bonus game at the top (10). An 'O' is on a tall stack of barrels which may be reached by team-jumping to a blast barrel just before the continue barrel. And there's a 'G' in the chest to the right of the '!' barrel too. Or, if you can't be pestered with playing properly, just throw your team mate up from the second highest barrel in the stack at the start (just right of the first bonus barrel) to find a level warp (11).





Lockjaw's Locker

Get Enguarde and swim to the right and up (12). When you reach a letter 'A' in bananas, turbo attack the big crate to the right for a bonus game. By the 'No Enguarde' sign, go up and to the right. When the water level drops, swim to the right, and stay on the high crate. Helicopter jump right and follow the bananas to find a DK coin (13). Too much trouble? Well, just follow the ceiling to the left after the water level rises (14). A warp barrel is hidden between two cases which will take you to the end of the level.

Top Sail Trouble

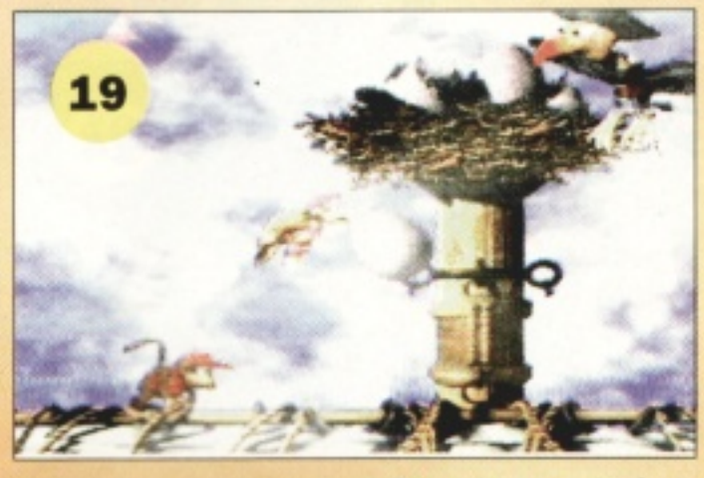
About halfway to the continue barrel, after the two Click-Clacks, climb all the way up

the pole farthest to the right for a bonus game (15). And, just past halfway, keep an eye out for two Flitters above a rope. Jump to the right of them to find an invisible hook. Now bounce off the Flitters to find a

bonus game (16). For a DK Coin perform Dixie's helicopter jump right of a horizontal rope with 3 Zingers on it (17). And to the right of the end point (don't hit that target yet!) lurk a 'G' letter and a blue extra life balloon (18). Get them. And finally, yet again, cheats can skip the whole affair by helicopter jumping below the sail you start on (as in Mainbrace Mayhem).

Krow's Nest

Keep left and wait for Krow to fling some eggs at you. As they bounce towards you, jump on them to stop them, then, when Krow flies low enough, fling them at him. A couple of hits and he'll begin throwing more eggs, most of which will pass through the floor. Wait for the ones that bounce, jump



on them, and fling them as before (20). A few more hits and he's a goner. Time for stage two...

Crocodile Cauldron

Hot Head Hop

A green extra life balloon is just above your start position, you know (21). And another thing, a 'K' letter lies in chest right at the start and a Kannonball is in another chest directly below the 'O' letter. Put it in the Kannon to the right for a bonus game (22). After you've got Squitter the spider, build web platforms up at the 'Y' of bananas to find a DK Coin (23). And just after the 'N', before the 'No Squitter' sign, perform this trick again to reach a bonus barrel. You can't miss it (24). The warp barrel for this level is just above your starting point. Perform upwards team-jumps to hit it.

DKC2 'Did you know?'s

Did you know that when you've collected all the Kremkoins in a level an exclamation mark appears next to its name on the map screen? Or that if you collect a level's DK Coin a 'DK' appears too? So 'Mainbrace Mayhem' can become 'Mainbrace Mayhem! DK'? Well, you do now.

Did you know that to earn access to the hidden 'Lost World' stage you must earn 15 Kremkoins per stage and pay them to Klubba to cross his bridge? And that only when all the Klubbas have been paid will the secret stage reveal itself? Well, you do now.

Did you know that there's a 'Music Test' option where you can listen to all of *DKC2*'s top tunes? Simply begin a new game in one of your empty save game locations, highlight '2 Player Contest' and press down five or six times. The new option will appear at the bottom of the list. 'Brambles' is our particular fave. What d'you reckon?

Did you know that there's a 'Cheat Mode' too? Yup, simply highlight your new 'Music Test' option (see above) and press down five or six times as before. Voila – a 'Cheat Mode' option! Now highlight it and press slowly Y, A, Select, A, Down, Left, A, Down. Now you'll start your game with 50 lives! Yes, 50 LIVES! Another great code to try is B, A, Right, Right, A, Left, A, X. Now you'll begin every level with both Diddy and Dixie.

Did you know that there's some great Pro Action Replay codes too? Just slide your eyes down a bit.

7E0E – 709E makes Dixie invincible.
7E08 – CA50 gives 80 coins.
7E08 – CC50 gives 80 Kremkoins.
And 7E08 – CE28 gives 40 DK Coins.

letter 'G' to the Clapper (28). Jump him, then swim down and to the right to find a 'I' barrel. Now just follow the trail of bananas to a DK Coin (29). There's a level warp to be had by throwing your friend up at the right side of the cases after taking out the first Klampon. It's near the ceiling (30).

Red Hot Ride

Jump onto the balloons and hold Y whilst pressing left or right to steer them. Collect Rambi, then after your first ride with him on the balloon, perform a special attack on the wall with the two Krunchas on it to reveal a bonus game (31). Immediately after the continue barrel, jump on the balloon and steer it left, under the platform to find another bonus game (32). Next find the 'N' letter. Throw your mate up here 'cos there's a DK Coin to collect. The warp barrel is above the first steam jet to the right of the 'K' (33). Use the team-up throw to reach it and keep trying, you'll find it eventually.

for a chest behind a Krook – it's got an 'O' in it. Now get Squawks and fly up until you find two Krooks facing each other either side of a gap (35). Fly over the one to the right to find both a bonus game and a DK Coin (36). There's a warp barrel here too. It's under the right-hand platform at the bottom (37). Dixie's helicopter jump will fly you over to it.

Kannon's Klaim

The first bonus is easy. Just helicopter jump Dixie off the first platform, following the arrow to the right, to find it (25). Further right from here is a DK Coin too. From the continue barrel head right until you find a platform with three bananas on it with a DK barrel above. Jump on the nearby Neckys to find a bonus barrel to the left (26). Two platforms before the end a 'G' is hidden in a chest and an 'N' is just below the end platform too. At the end of the level jump right of the target platform, falling between it and the one next to it. Float downwards slowly with Dixie's helicopter spin to find a bonus game barrel. Wanna warp? Okay then, it's below the left edge of the third platform (27). Dixie's helicopter jump will get you there.

Squawks Shaft

There's a 'K' near the start, hidden in a chest. Just before half way, jump left of the continue barrel's platform and throw your mate up into the barrel above for a bonus game (34). There's another bonus game the second time you meet three Klomps. Jump to the right with Dixie's helicopter jump here to find it. Watch

Kleever's Kiln

Jump the fireballs that the sword flings at you and wait for a Kannonball (38). When it appears, grab it and throw it at the sword. You can use the hooks to cross the lava pit to a platform on the right. Once there, do as before; jump the fireballs, pick up and throw the Kannonballs. Keep going until you've hit the sword three times, whereupon the sword will leave the lava and chase you all over the shop (39). Just keep dodging it, crossing from side to side grabbing Kannonballs and hurling them at it until it's dead. Now stage 3...

Lava Lagoon

Get Enguarde the swordfish by heading down and right after the first Clapper after the continue barrel. There's an 'N' to be had by following a banana arrow up. Past half way, after the 'No Enguarde' sign, break the left side of a crate by throwing a barrel at it, to find a bonus game. Next, swim up from the

Krem Quay

Barrel Bayou

Get Rambi and when you lose him at the 'No Rambi' sign you'll get a DK Coin. Now watch for an arrow pointing left (40). Follow the Kloak left and wait for him to throw a chest at you. There's a Kannonball inside which you can deposit in Kannon further to the left for a bonus game. Continue through the level until you reach the big gap, after the 'G', with a barrel moving side to side in it. A team-up throw will put you in the bonus barrel you can see there (41).

Spooky, eh? All those monkey heads floating about. They're a delicacy in China, you know.

arrow to reach a bonus barrel. And finally, right at the end of the level, a 'G' is one of the goodies up for grabs at the end target.

Slime Climb

Get the 'K' near the start if you know what's good for you (50), then soldier on past the continue barrel, kill the Klump and get the 'I' barrel. Now jump in the water and swim down, following a trail of bananas to a bonus barrel (51). Later on, get the Kannonball and put it in the Kannon for a bonus game. A 'G' is under the sail to the left of the Kannon and there's a DK Coin right at the end of the level below the end target's platform. Get the 'I' barrel off to the left, and jump into the water swimming below the end target to get it (52).

Glimmers Galleon

Ignore the arrow, swim up at the start instead and follow the bananas to a bonus game (42). After the game, swim up and right to find a room with a number 2 in it. To the right up this room is a room with a 3 in it and above this is a room containing a 4 where you'll also find a DK Coin (43). After the continue barrel watch for two sets of three Shuris. Work your way downwards from here and you'll find a crate below a Lockjaw. It's the entrance to a bonus game. You'll find a 'G' on the right-hand side of the level at the top of a long vertical shaft (44). That's it.

Rattle Battle

Right at the start of the level, above the door leading to Rattly's room, jump up to find an invisible Barrel Kannon. From there team-throw up into a bonus barrel (47). Between the 'O' letter and the continue barrel there's a gap in the deck, the right side much higher than the left. Jump into the right side to find a DK Coin (48). Next, after the continue barrel and 'N' letter, perform a super jump (hold A) at the banana arrow pointing up to reach a bonus barrel (49). Just before the level's end, there's a 'G' at the top of a stack of barrels. That's yer lot here.

Bramble Blast

Find the area with the four rotating barrel Kannons. Now blast UL, UR, UR, DR, UR, UL, UL, UL, DL, through an arrow barrel kannon, DR, and DL into a bonus barrel. (U = Up, D = Down, L = Left, R = Right) (53). After the continue barrel, go right, then up through a gap to find an extra life. Squawks is near the end of the level, where you must blast from a barrel, bounce off a single Flitter into another barrel, then blast from that barrel and bounce of four Flitters. Bounce left off the first of the Flitters, into a hole, then follow the trail of bananas down to find him. Now you have him fly left and

Krockhead Clamber

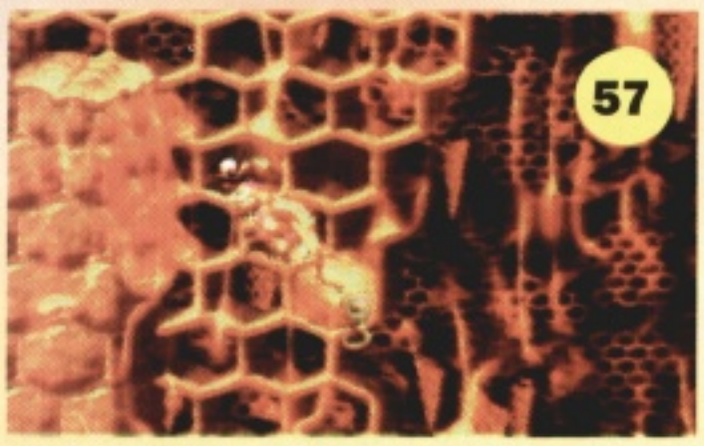
Go left at the beginning of the level to reveal a chest which contains a DK Coin (45). Break it on each of the four Zingers to open it. Now head right, jumping from reed to reed across the level, using Flitters to help clear the big gaps (46). Just past the continue barrel, perform a team-up throw at the upwards-pointing banana

up to find a DK Coin (54). Now head to the right to find a bonus barrel. A 'G' letter lies directly above the end target. Blast up from the barrel, rather than down at the target to get it.

Kudgel's Kontest

When Kudgel jumps he disappears off the top of the screen and reappears directly above you. So run left or right to avoid him

landing on you. Try to stay as far away from him as possible, as he lashes out with his club every so often. Keep running left and right under his jumps until you get a TNT barrel which you should throw at him (55). Keep doing this and eventually he'll be defeated (56). Stage four, anyone?

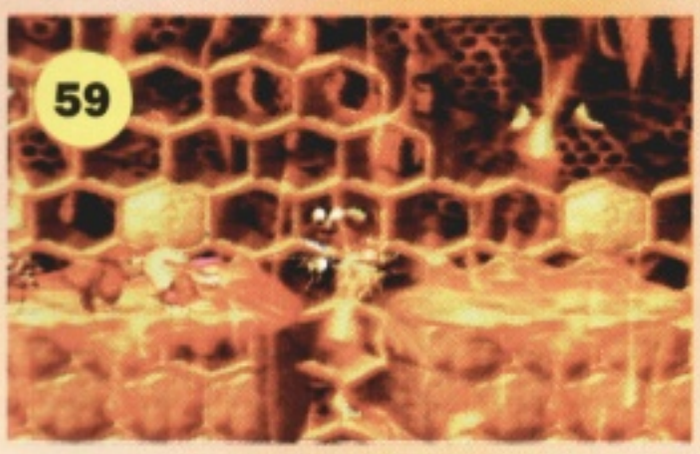


Krazy Kremland

Hornet Hole

Team-throw up at the beginning of the level to find a hook. Now climb the honey on the left, then go right across three hooks into the hole in the wall for a bonus game (57). Also early on, there's a green extra life balloon in a chest. Just climb the right-most wall to the top to find it (58). Another bonus game lies past the continue barrel, where there's a hook at the top of the screen.

Team-throw up to it and climb the honey to find Squitter. Continue until you find the 'N' then blast up from there, head left to land on a platform then use Squitter's web platforms to work your way up and right where you'll find a doorway to it. Finding the DK Coin is easy. Just watch for a single Zinger sitting above a hole in the honey. Use Squitter to kill him, then fall into the hole and go left and up to find it (59). Finally a 'G' letter may be won at the end target.



Target Terror

Get ready for when the car in front starts throwing barrels (60). Jump to avoid them. Jump to get a letter 'N' and, when passing through the wooden house, jump again to get a DK Coin. A bonus barrel lies above the tracks a little further on, after the first Klank leaves the track. A good jump at the top of the hill will send you into it (61). There's

another bonus game after the continue barrel. Follow the second Klank down through the gap in the tracks (don't jump) to reach it (62). You'll get a 'G' automatically when you leave this bonus game. Good, eh?

Bramble Scramble

A 'K' letter awaits you to the right of your start position. Then, after climbing the first vertical rope, jump and team throw upwards

to hit the 'I' barrel (63). Now drop down into the hole to the right of the platform. Keep going right then blast upwards to a bonus barrel (64). Once you're past the continue barrel and 'No Squawks' sign, jump right

through the hedge wall to collect Squitter (65). Now build web platforms up until you reach two banana coins. Pass back through the wall here to find a DK Coin.

Rickety race

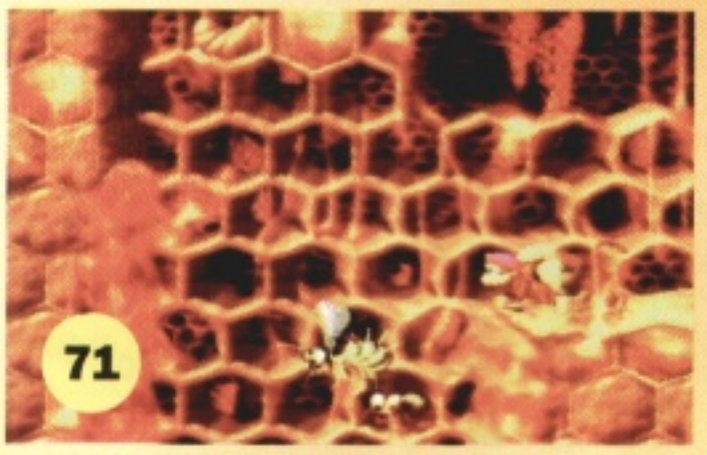
At the start of the level, go to the left and perform two team-up jumps to climb the building there. Now, use Dixie's helicopter

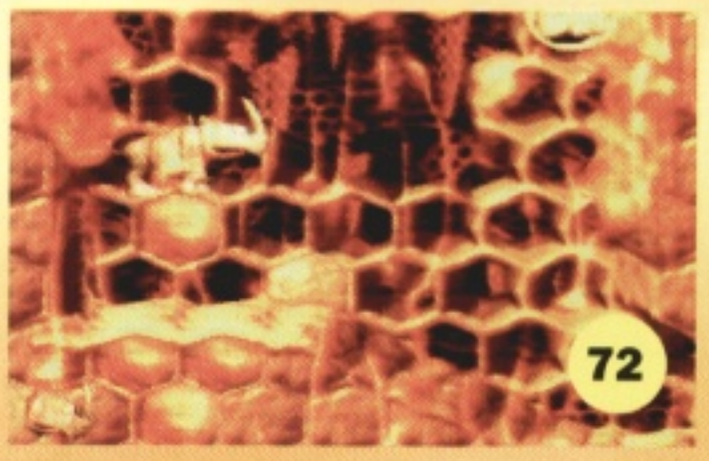
jump to fly right and find a bonus game (66). A top tip here is, while waiting for the green light at the start of the race (67), hold left to go backwards a little way and receive a big push from a hidden '+' barrel which will help you win the race and claim your DK Coin prize. There's an 'N' as a runner-up prize too, so don't get too upset if you lose.

Mudhole Marsh

About halfway between the continue barrel and the end of the level, pick up the Kannon ball on a platform above the first Cat O' Nine Tails (69) and carry it to the Kannon farther right for a bonus game (70). Next, just before the continue barrel, team-throw up into the barrel Kannon you'll see there for another bonus game. On your travels break all the

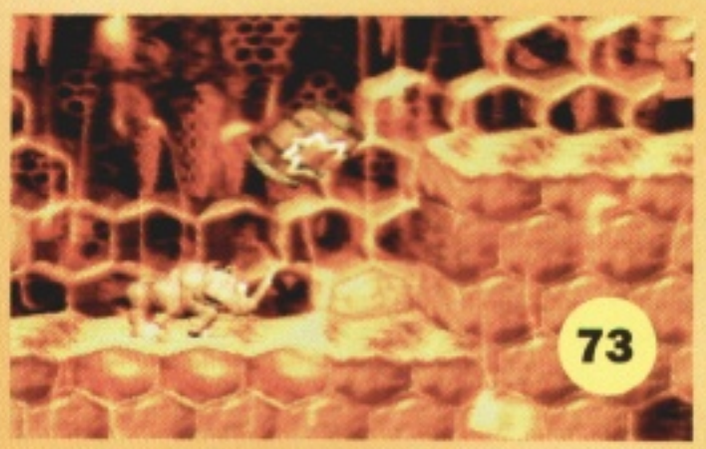
chests you find lying about on the heads of hapless enemies. Amongst the goodies contained therein is an 'O' letter. Careful timing of your landing on the end target will yield a DK Coin.





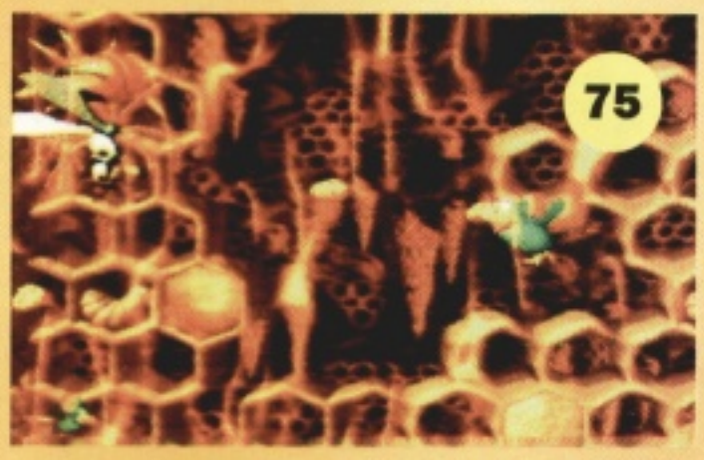
Rambi Rumble

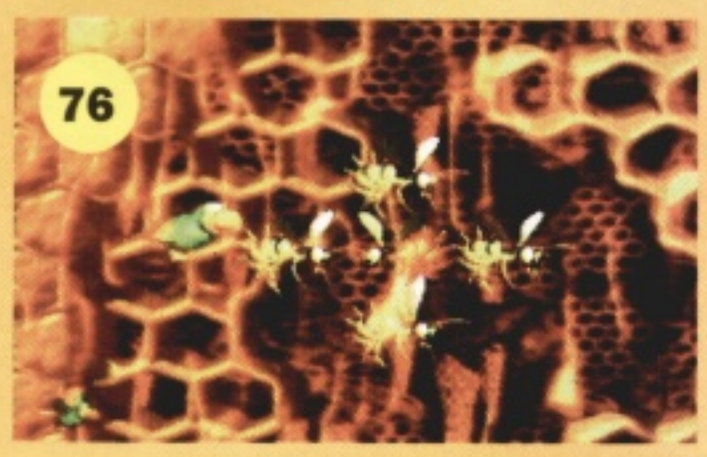
After your second climb up the sticky walls, watch for a lone banana up and to the left. Jump at it and it will expose itself to be a hidden hook (71). From there jump left, climb the wall and find a bonus game. Now continue until you find Rambi. Perform Rambi's special attack and jump right to reach the DK Coin just peeking into view at the top of the screen (72). Next, perform another special attack on the wall with the barrel in front of it (73). And finally, a 'G' letter is one of the items available from the end target.



King Zing Sting

As Squawks, fly after the giant Zinger, keeping behind him and firing at the stinger on his tail. This is his only vulnerable point. Avoid the white needles he fires in all directions after a couple of hits, and keep shooting that stinger. After six stinger hits, he transforms into a red Zinger with four others flying around him. Quickly kill the four outer Zingers and hit the centre one twice to kill it. Phew. You're halfway through the game. We'll take you the rest of the way next month. Bye.





SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

GAMEFREAK

By Tony Mott

You have a problem. Your mates haven't got a clue what the answer is, nor do the clueless spongs down at your local Electronics Boutique. Never fear. Help isn't far away...

From Mike Hughes, Wallasey, Merseyside:

Q I read somewhere that there was a portable SNES released in Japan. Is there any truth in this? (And, if so, where can I get one from?)

A There was indeed a portable SNES released in Japan, but it's no longer in production and therefore something of a collector's item. I doubt there are many kicking around the UK.

Q I'm currently playing *Earthbound* and I wondered which of the following you'd recommend next: *Legend Of The Mystical Ninja*, *Final Fantasy III* or *Chrono Trigger*?

A *Final Fantasy III*, 'cos there's never been a game like it before or since.

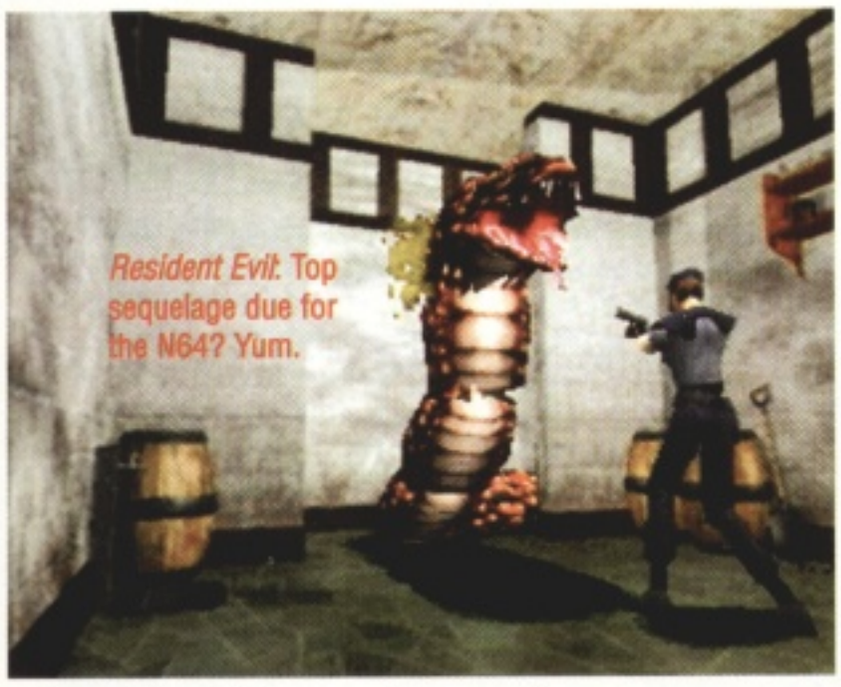
Q Any news of RPGs in development for the N64?

A Enix are making progress with their N64 work, but they still haven't confirmed whether their first game will be a *Dragon Quest* game. No other RPGs have yet been announced, either.

From Kevin Haynes, Letchworth, Herts:

Q Will *Resident Evil* be converted to the N64 or will it just be on the PS and PC?

A It won't be coming to the N64, but I heard a rumour the other day that Capcom are working on a similar sort of game for the machine. Perhaps a real-time sequel? Phwoar.



Resident Evil: Top sequelage due for the N64? Yum.

Q I read in a fairly recent issue of Gamefan that Vic Tokai have a *Golgo 13* game in development. Any info on it, and any chance of an N64 version?

A Vic Tokai don't have a licence to work on the N64, so you won't see it on a Nintendo machine. Anyway, who wants to play as a hero who drives a Ford Capri?

Q I know they will earn and deserve it, but do you think PS owners in the US and UK will give Square the respect and admiration they deserve in a world of arcade perfect conversions galore?

A Blimey, what a question. Well, it's certainly true that many PlayStation owners aren't your archetypal gameheads, so I doubt that sector will appreciate Square's efforts. But I can see Square building a similar following among PS fans as they have SNES lovers.

Q What do Enix think of the whole Square fiasco, and how will they use it to their advantage?

A Enix haven't commented on Square's decision, but the only real way they'll use it to their advantage is if they start making more commitment to the West.

Q With Square gone, will anyone challenge them for the number one RPG software company slot?

A Nope.

Q Any chance of an article on changing the original art on game packaging and names from Japan to the West? This has been bugging me for ages now.

A Consider your suggestion officially put forward to the *SP* team.

Q When will we see another *Super Play Gold*, and is the first one still available or not?

A Another *SP Gold* isn't planned, and the first one hasn't available for yonks now. Tell you what, send me your full address and I'll send you one of my special copies from here in the office. I'm such a softie.

Q What anime/manga would the *SP* team like to see made into an N64 game?

A Personally I'm still waiting for someone to do the definitive *Akira* game – the very idea of powering around a neon-soaked city on *that* bike (in full 3D, natch) makes me go all funny in the trouser department. Wil wants to see an Assemble Insert idol heroine simulator, Ali favours a game licensed from Adventure! Iczer-3, while Ollie would go for a 3D version of Captain Tsubasa. I can't tell you what Sean wants to see 'cos he's currently sunning his rump in Portugal.

From Robert Vowles, Northwich, Cheshire:

Q I hope you'll forgive me, but I was reading NMS the other day, and that fat sweaty bloke David Upchurch said that Namco are currently coding a version of *Ace Driver* for the Nintendo 64. But I read in *Super Play* that they aren't. Who's right?

A You are forgiven, but do you *really* have to ask the question? No, take it from me, Namco aren't doing *Ace Driver* on the N64.

From Matthew Cardona, Bath, Avon:

Q I've recently bought a US convertor for my SNES. Is it true that it is bad for my SNES if I use it too often?

A No, not if you use it in the manner in which it is intended.

Q Is it true that the UK game I put in my convertor will eventually be wiped?

A There's no chance of the actual game code being wiped, but there's a danger that you might lose saved game positions, so try not to use games with battery-backed RAM.

Q In most Japanese import games, does the instruction manual get written in different languages, e.g. English?

A Most Japanese game manuals are 100%

MegaMan X3's manual is typical of Japanese games.

Japanese, although there are a few exceptions which – like a lot of Japanese game-related stuff – includes bits and pieces of English.

Q Why can't Nintendo just release the N64 as soon as it's ready? Surely they'd make more money this way.

A There are, of course, finished Nintendo 64s ready to roll in Japan, but without software to sell next to them, what's the point in Nintendo making them available? There are no sinister motives at work here and, at the end of the day, the delays will mean good news for gamers.

Q Except for *Street Racer* and *Stunt Race FX*, are there any racing games for the SNES that you could advise me to get? (Don't say *Mario Kart*!)

A *Rock 'n' Roll Racing*? *F-Zero*? They're both fabbage.

From Thomas Holzer, Theale:

Thanks for printing my letter again. Sorry to hear that you didn't feel professional enou– *(Snip! – GF)*

Look. I thought I told you to go away in issue 42. Your abusive, cretinous rants aren't welcome here.

From Daniel Petricca, Ormskirk, Lancs:

Q I read that the price of all SNES games were being reduced in February to allow the N64 to sell games at that price. They were not. When will the prices be dropped, and by how much?

A They've already dropped in Japan – Square's new 32-meg games cost ¥8,000 (approx. £50) whereas a little while back they were clocking in at ¥11,400 (approx. £71) – but the price of SNES carts in the UK aren't likely to drop drastically until the N64 launches here.

Q I saw a game in an old magazine (Super Action) called *Boxing Legends Of The Ring*. It was a Japanese import. Did it get a UK release? It looked great.

A Yes, I believe it did, although it was a long time ago and not in big numbers.

From Karkay Tang, Watford, Herts:

Q Have Capcom officially stopped producing games for the SNES?

A In Japan, yes, but a few of their games are to come out here through Marubeni.

Q How good is the Japanese game, *Final Fantasy V*?

A I've not really played it much because it's in Japanese, but one of my Japanese contacts assures me that it's pretty good if you can get into it.

Q Have any *Dragon Quest* games been released in the US? I can't find them anywhere on the SNES.

A The first three became available in the States as *Dragon Warrior* parts I to III on the NES, but you'll not see any SNES versions. Ever.

Q What's happened to Enix's *Project J*? Was it successful?

A It sold pretty well in Japan, but the closure of Enix's US office has ruined the chances of it getting a Western release.

A bit lightweight and a bit too Euro-focused, but *Games War* ain't too bad.

From Bayard Randel (A member of the Gamefreakhood):

Q Have Square decided to let *Seiken Densetsu 3* remain untranslated, or are they just prolonging it until the release of the N64?

A Despite lots of pressure from SNES-owning RPG-heads, it's remaining untranslated, sadly.

Q I'm worried that the eventual N64 *Final Fantasy* game will be merely a simple copy of the PlayStation's *FFVII*. Please shed some light on the situation.

A No, when Square finally get around to doing something on the N64 it'll be an original game.

Q Is Nintendo considering expanding their satellite gaming network into America or Europe?

A Nintendo certainly have big plans in this area, but you won't see anything happen until the N64 is established, and then maybe not even in the UK.

Q What sort of gear do I need to connect my NTSC SNES to a PAL telly?

A I'm sure I've answered this before here. You need a PAL booster, which you can get from Fire on 01302 751428.

Q Are there any books out there, besides *Game Over*, about the development of the game industry?

A Well, there's certainly nothing around to compare to the quality of *Game Over*, but you might want to have a dabble at *Game War* (published by Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd.; ISBN 0-906097-34-7), which covers the scene from a fairly statistical angle, or maybe *Inside Electronic Game Design* (from American company Prima Publishing; ISBN 1-55958-669-9), which includes a good, if rather brief, section on the development of videogames from their earliest beginnings.

DAYDREAMING

Welcome once again to the bit where we let you make a mess all over our lovely mag with your game-related fantasies. We give prizes for good ones, y'know.

Kevin Haynes of Letchworth, Herts has the first go this month:

"I'd ever so much like to see *Actraiser 3* on the N64. In it, the god character would be reincarnated as a fetching female. Instead of only conquering one planet from demons, you would have a whole solar system of about 20 or 30 planets to play with. You would have to build up your towns into sprawling futuristic (*FFIII* industrial style or even more hi-tech) metropoli. In a two-player game (via the Net or otherwise), the second person would play a rival demon goddess, as you battle for control of the solar system you can call upon your most advanced worlds to aid in your fight. You would even be able to destroy a world if you wanted to, and start again from scratch. Destruction of a world would affect other worlds' climates, hell, maybe your people could get trigger-happy and destroy themselves. It would, of course, all take place in glorious 3D. With Square's absence from the N64 this would make everyone's day."

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INDEPENDENT SNES AND NINTENDO 64 MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY
ISSUE 43
MAY 1996
EXCLUSIVE!
NINTENDO64 Final launch date and first Games revealed
KILLER INSTINCT 2
FINAL FIGHT VS FRONT MISSION
Fists against mecha – the sequels square up!

Just think – a *Super Play* sim. Cor.

Mmm. Very ambitious. You don't mention what the action scenes would be like, though, and I'll have to dock you a few points for that.

The second and final effort is from Daniel Hobart from Swindon, Wilts:

"My daydream is about a magazine simulator-type thing. Your main objective is to create a half-decent mag. But if you wanted you could just play games from a large number available for review. After a certain period of time, the games available would change (because your Nintendo 256 or whatever would be linked to a satellite). You would have to review the games using good grammar and stuff. It would be viewed from a first-person perspective, and after you've put your mag together you could present it to your 3D rendered editor. He/she would give you a score out of ten. If you got a high enough mark you would become an editor yourself, and then you'd be able to boss your colleagues around, and tell them to make the tea and stuff. If you got bored you could run down the road to the video shop and rent a video."

A 3D rendered editor, huh? What a prospect. Have a small amount of prizeage for at least being original with your imaginings. Next time, people.

NEED ADVICE?

Then come here for it:

Gamefreak, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. (Or e-mail: tmott@futurenet.co.uk)

MODE 7

By ZY NICHOLSON

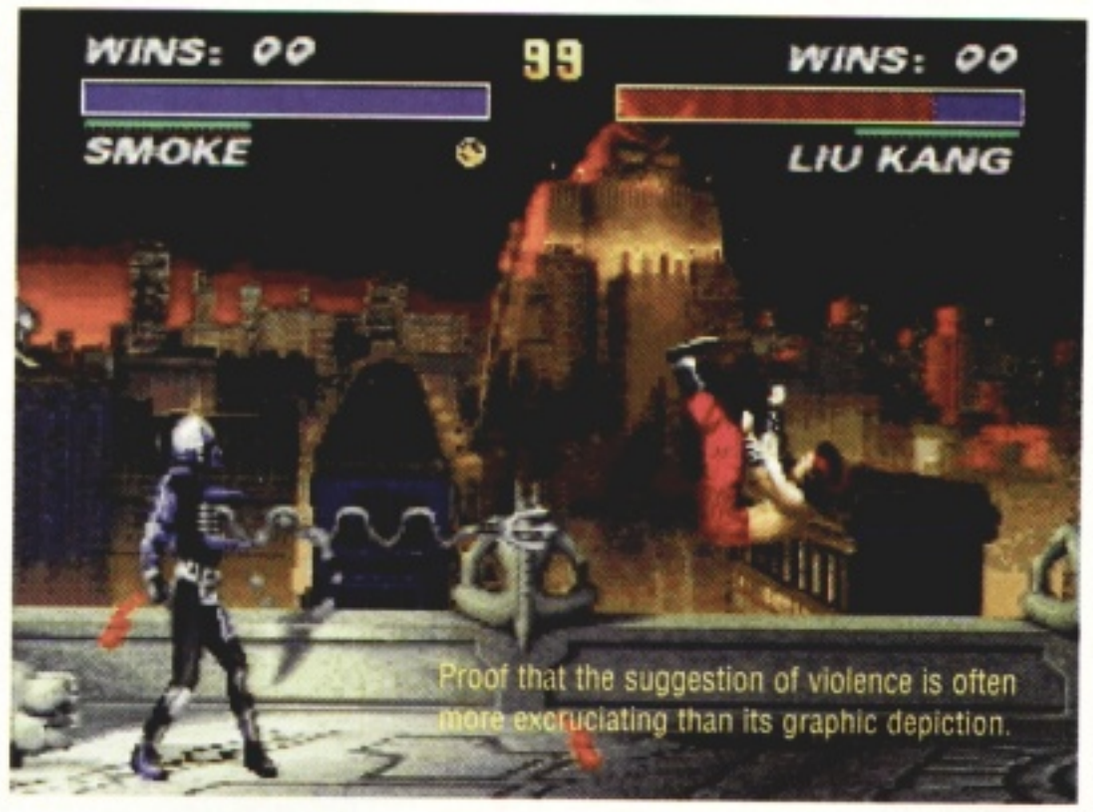
CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME-FREAKS!

Thanks for your response. Every month from now on I'll be plundering the comprehensive archives of Modus Septum and devoting a page of this illustrious column to classic cheats. If you've got an old game and you want to see it tipped, drop me a line at the usual address and I can build up a picture of the games most in need of coverage. When I say "the usual address", I mean this...

Mode 7,
Super Play,
Future
Publishing,
30 Monmouth St,
Bath BA1 2BW.

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

(Acclaim)
***SP*37: 85%**

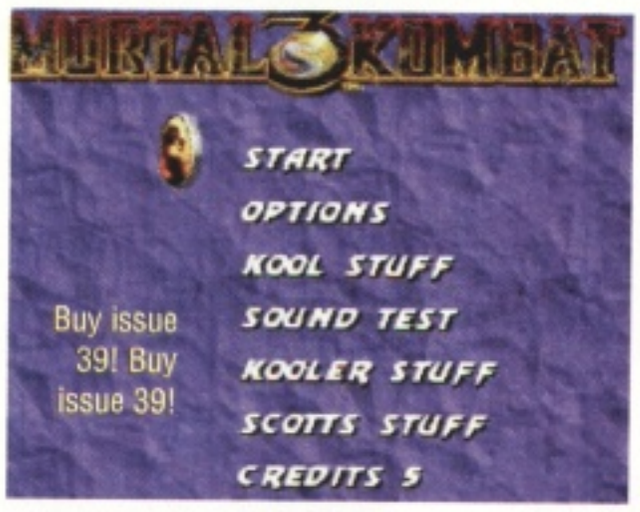


Proof that the suggestion of violence is often more excruciating than its graphic depiction.

● Smoke's 99-hit combo

It's Kaveh Rassouli of Aberdeen and Andrew Densley of Bath who share the honours for this little gem. Access the extra option menus using the cheats we printed in issue 39's Mode 7. Set Smoke to ON, Health Recovery to ON, Quick Uppercut Recovery to ON and enable the Power Kode (not sure this last bit is necessary, but see).

Choose to play as Smoke (er, obviously). Uppercut your opponent, following it instantly with the extending claw harpoon move (so that's D+HP, B, B, LP). You must catch them on their way down from the uppercut, before they hit the ground, for this to work. Having plucked them from the air and reeled them in close, they're ripe for another uppercut. And then a claw harpoon. And another uppercut, ad infinitum. An RSI-inducing 99 hit combo is thus possible if you keep looping the process.



Kaveh also wants to tell the world about his cheat-free 15 hit combo with Kabal – and what the hey, he's caught me in a good mood. Jump in with a kick and, as your opponent lands, do the whirlwind move. Follow up with the combo LK, LK, HP, HP, D+HP and tag on 'the Shredder'. While your victim is being shredded, run towards them and repeat the combo given. The uppercut will launch them skywards, whereupon you may get in a jump kick and fireball. And if the last move finished near the edge of the screen, you can also get in a sweep kick as they fall.

How pleasant to find something new that isn't a glitch.

21 hits, 99% damage. See it for yourself.

BREATH OF FIRE II

(Capcom)
***SP*41: 81%**

● Bleu, the hidden character

What a mistake we made, putting screenshots of Bleu in our review (SP41). Since then we've been inundated with begging letters from rolegamers so desperate to discover how they might find *BOF2*'s hidden playable character that they've even opened their curtains during the daytime (ooh!), dragged themselves away from the joypad (eeh!), and wandered into the big scary blue room (or 'outside', as it's more commonly known) to visit the post office. Such courageous demonstrations of physical activity cannot go unrewarded.

Once you have the Whale at your command, travel to the south-east corner of the map and look for a beach on the southern coast of this small area of desert. If you look closely you'll see a small whirlpool in

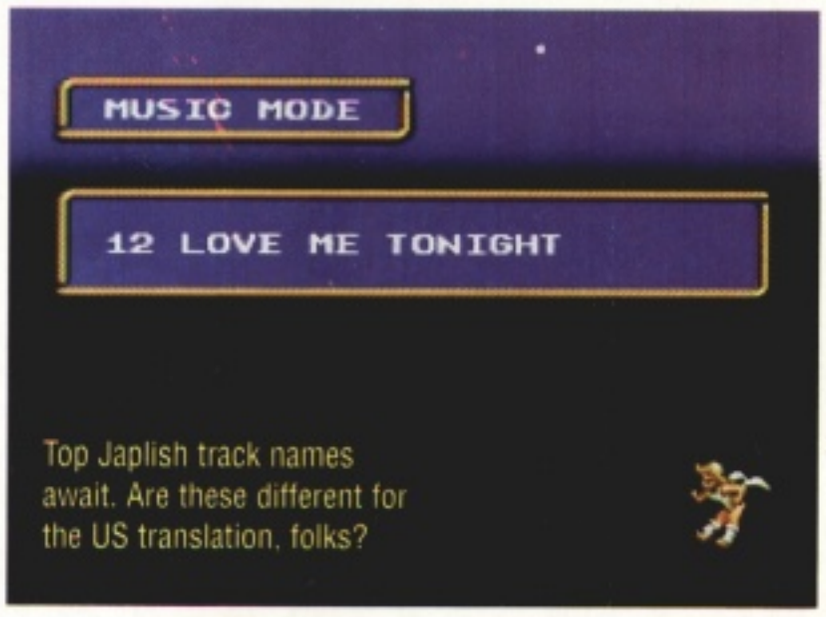
OGRE BATTLE

(Enix)
*SP*34: 80%

- **Sound test**
- **Item information**

Much like the FIRESEAL cheat of a few months back, this one. Start a new game and enter your hero's name as MUSIC/ON. This will call up the familiar and predictably tiny menu screen that allows you to listen to all of *Ogre Battle*'s tracks and FX. It's rousing stuff, no question, and we thank the boy Dowrick of Edmonton for his tip.

Incidentally, if you want to find out more about those special items that your units often discover then here's something not mentioned in the manual. Go to the Use Item menu and highlight the object under scrutiny, then press SELECT to call up a handy info box of stats and powers.



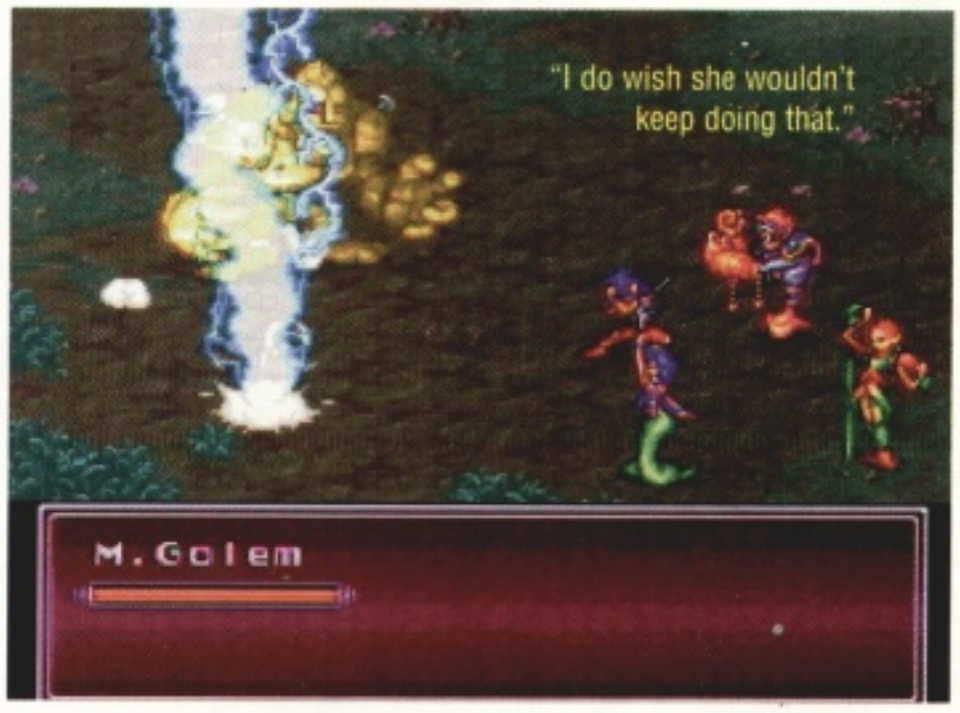
the sand – walk into it to enter what remains of Wisdon.

Talk to both the spirits inside and you'll be told that Bleu isn't home. Many players have found this, but it's easy to see why further investigation has failed to reveal her location.

What you must do now is return to Hometown and visit the Magic School. Talk to all of the students inside and you should, in due course, find one who reveals herself to be Bleu. Although you're unlikely to remember, she was the one who previously said "Fascinating! We didn't have magic like this when I was young." At this point, Bleu will automatically join your party.

Remember the Magic School? It had a naff gag about mouth-to-mouth magic.

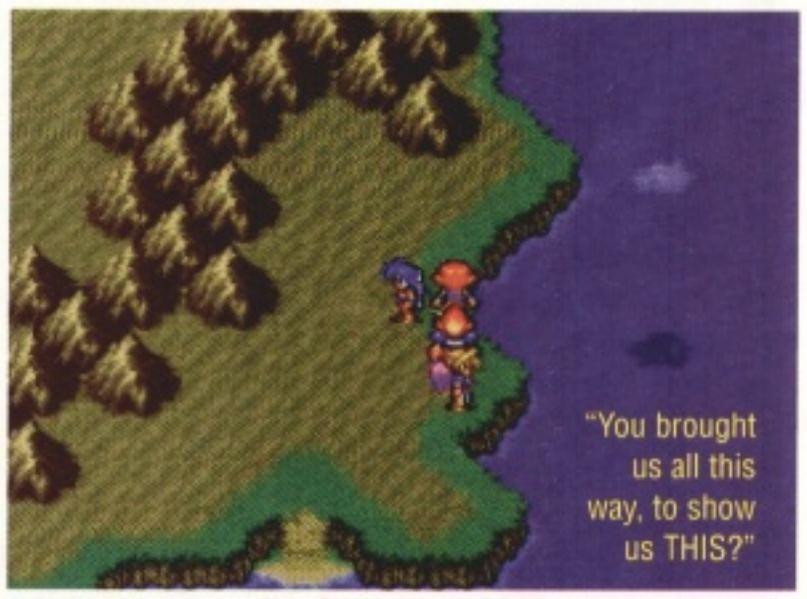
Bleu's not at home right now. Pretty obvious why not.

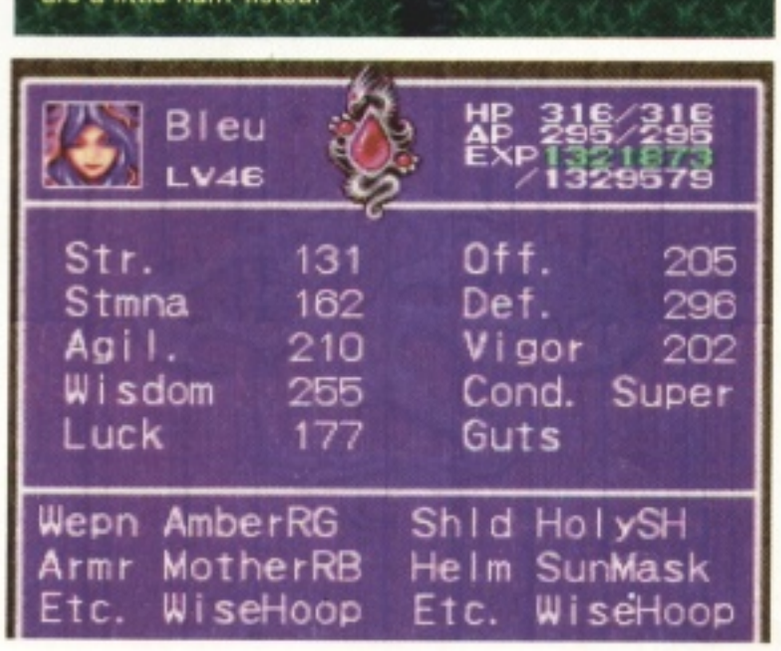


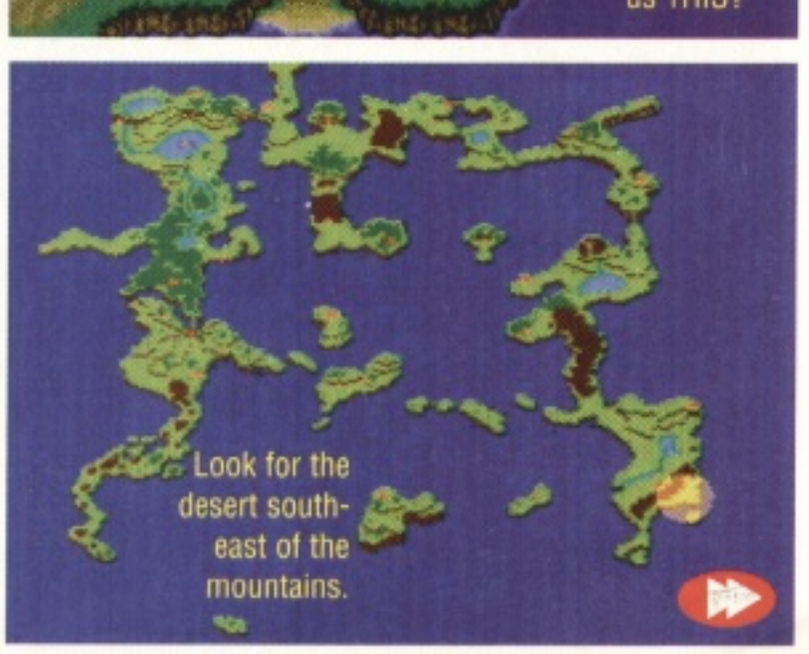
Even though her powers have dwindled over the years, she's still a formidable spellcaster and will be at least level 30 when you meet. Her magic includes strong offensive spells but I found that Attack Up, when cast on the Hero, proved most useful. And for an extra surprise, put her at the front of the party to discover her special ability (on the Y button) in the hunting sub-game...

It's the sheer quantity of secret special things that makes *BOF2* worthwhile, so I'll be compiling more tips and a walkthru when space permits. Have you found any decent Township recipes, for instance? And what of the six (yes, six) shamen with whom your characters may unite? If you wish to share your discoveries with the RPG community, send them to "the usual address".

Unfortunately, using Bleu to talk to Bo and Karn on the island of Giants doesn't prompt them to join in too.







MEGA MAN X3

(Capcom)
SP42: 70%

● **The best 'code'?**
This is the best code you can get, according to R. Hung of Leicester:

2277
5163
6122
7837

However, I am in doubt of its finality. I understand that *Mega Man X3* boasts different end sequences depending on whether Zero survives or not, and that it's possible for Megs to acquire both a 9th capsule and the use of Zero's Light Sabre. More information next month, hopefully.

Keep Zero alive and he'll save you from a spiky death later on. But can you find his sword?

If she says it's 0, it's OK.

SB3. Enter 5656 as your password and you'll skip straight to a Battle Game. The eventual winner of the match will start the next round in a bright gold suit so that everybody can tell who they are.

Sounds a bit like painting a target on your chest and pinning a 'kick me' notice to your back, if you ask me.

SUPER BOMBERMAN 3

(Virgin)
SP37: 89%

● **Golden Bomberman**

Responding to Compton's demands, Simon Black of Inverness has sent in a code to recreate *Super Bomberman 2*'s Golden Bomberman effect on

DON'T ASK ALLAN
INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

Dear Zy,
Is SP40, in response to Adam Knowles, you stated to find the Rod5 *[in Breath of Fire – Zy]* you need to open a chest in the vault. This is not exactly true. If you fall down the hole to the left of the vault, there will be a couple of people and three chests. You need to push one of these and press A to search beneath it. This will reveal the Rod5.
Ann Simpson, Birmingham
Zy Says,
Gratefully, I stand corrected.

Dear Zy,
I've found a shortcut in Hot Head Hop on *DKC2*. Place Diddy on Dixie's shoulders and throw him up to the ledge above the entrance at the start of the level. Join up again to get both of them up there and throw Diddy straight up to find a warp to a room with lots of bananas.
Michael Scally, Exeter
Zy Says:
Actually, these warps exist on practically every level of the first two worlds. In each case you need to search for invisible barrels near the start, often by using the team-up throw or Dixie's helicopter glide. You'll be blasted to a banana room that exits near the end of the level. I've heard there are more later on, so maybe I'm still missing a few?

Dear Zy,
Is 102% the most you can get on *Diddy's Kong Quest*? Because Klubba's Kiosk still has a Kremling face, but I have all the DK and Krem Coins. The game took me only nine days.
Matthew Morrow, Kidlington, Oxon
Zy says
Yes, 102% would appear to be the maximum. But 'only' nine days? That's pretty good value for nine day's solid videogaming entertainment, wouldn't you agree? Ask any PC owner who completed *Full Throttle* in one sitting...

Dear Zy,
I recently picked up *Shadowrun*. Great game, I thought, until I got stuck. For a whole weekend! Please, please tell me – how do you beat the Jester Spirit? And are all RPGs this tough?
Thom Reakes, Loughborough

A typically gritty moment from Beam's *Shadowrun*.

Zy Says:
First off, are you sure you know the demon's true name? The Vampire will tell you that the Jester Spirit's name is Nirwanda, but if you access all the data in the Dark Blade Club's computers you'll discover that he's lying. You have to use the stake on him a second time, not just threaten with it, for him to give you the vital keyword Laughlyn.

When you later confront the Jester Spirit, your Invisibility and Heal spells will prove essential. Blast away until he taunts you and then talk to him. Ask about Nirwanda, Laughlyn and Drake. You should learn of the Volcano, and your knowledge of his true name will bind him to your service. Talking of tough RPGs...

Dear Zy,
I've been playing an American cartridge of Capcom's *Eye Of The Beholder*, and I think your score was a mite unfair. That said, I'm still unable to open the portal needing a jewel-shaped stone (grovel, grovel). Do you know, or perhaps somebody else, where I find it? I have already found the stone Medallion, Orb, Sceptre, Dagger, Ring, Necklace and Grail.
Terence Maesknoll, Aberdeen

Er, he's dead. Capcom's *Eye of the Beholder*.

Zy says:
Ooh, ouch. Right then. Bloody right, then.
The stone gem key you're after doesn't exist, I'm afraid. It's one of the game's many dead ends, and a bit too elaborate a red herring for my liking. The portal leads nowhere. And I disagreed with the lacklustre hand-me-down conversion more than anything.

Lost Souls

Do you have information on the game *Star Trek: TNG*? I would prefer tips to help me through it. I would appreciate how to find the ten miners on Orientis Gamma B. Thank you very much.
Deb Fredrickson, the internet
Um... Apart from using the oxygen-independent Data, I remember nothing more than a tedious exploration of the mines in search of icy cocoons. You have to find the switches for ventilation systems that allow you to wake them up safely. Is that enough, or were you hoping for a map? If there's more to it, input from other readers would be welcome here.

Finally...

Thanks to Andrew Best for providing me with translated names of *Yoshi's Island* levels. Scary Skeleton Goonies, indeed.

Also, *Zelda III*'s Chris Houlihan DOES exist, according to several helpful *Splay* readers like Paul May of Horndean, but their given 'methods' are so diverse that I'm forced to assume it's a very rare random occurrence.

I'm miffed now. I must have played the game ten times over and I've never seen it. Bah.

SUPER BOMBERMAN

(Virgin)
*SP*9: 92%

● **Classic Tippage**
Although straight reprints are out of the question – we all agree it's a lousy way to treat our loyal, long-term readership – we can no longer refer newer readers to many back issues. Because, er, the loyal long-term readership has snaffled them all up. To cater for more recent SNES owners, therefore, we present the first of many strolls through the *Super Play* archives.

Mini Baby Bombers

Enter your password as 5656 and all of your bombermen will appear microscopically tiny. The password returns you to the main menu so you can choose to play a mini-bomber in either the Normal Game or, more amusingly, the Battle Game.

Sound Test

Plug a controller into the unused fifth multitap port and press R on the title screen menu to find a hidden music select. You can now listen to some memorably catchy Hudson Soft tunes (all updated and reworked beautifully for *Super Bomberman 3*, incidentally).

No, they don't get any better with age.

I'm A Firestarter

Begin a Normal Game and tap the A button repeatedly (or use a joypad with auto-fire, if you have one). When the bomb you've laid at your feet blows up, your temporary invincibility will protect you: keep hitting A rapidly and now try to move around. You'll discover your Bomberman has become a walking explosion. It wears off quickly, so make the most of it.

Joan d'Arc, incendiary avenger!

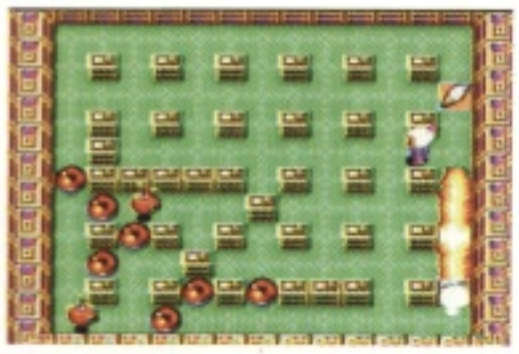
Level Codes

1-2	1504
1-3	2544
1-4	0513
1-5	4523
1-6	0562
1-7	5534
2-1	0055
2-2	4005
2-3	0043
2-4	5012
2-5	0022
2-6	5064
2-7	1032
3-1	5453
3-2	6404
3-3	2445
3-4	7414
3-5	5424
3-6	7565
3-7	3433
4-1	1155
4-2	5102
4-3	7144
4-4	2113
4-5	7125
4-6	3163
4-7	1134
5-1	4253
5-2	1203
5-3	4242
5-4	7215
5-5	3223
5-6	6262
5-7	1264
6-1	1653
6-2	3604
6-3	7645
6-4	5615
6-5	1624
6-6	4665
6-7	7632

Tactics

In the Normal Game, blasting the exit portal with bombs will produce more enemies and Ice Cream pick-ups. Once you've cleared the level you can use this trick to build up your high score – especially on Stage 1-2, where the Ice Cream is worth 50,000 points.

Unless nobody cares about high scores these days, that is, and I'm showing my age to even suggest such a thing.



Bomb the exit for ice cream tokens.

SUPER BOMBERMAN 2

(Virgin)
*SP*21: 91%

● **More classic tippage**

Normal Game

Stuck in on your own? Thinking you might have another crack at the bosses? Then enter 1111 as your password and you'll start the 1 or 2 player game in possession of almost all the available power ups.

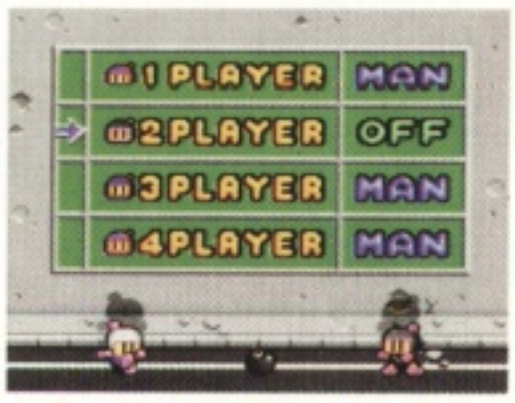
Level Codes

Alternatively, use one of these passwords to plunge straight in.

Level 1	4361
Level 2	6442
Level 3	3903
Level 4	9564
Level 5	7735

Ding Dong!

Housewife: "You were right, Penelope – this Battle Mode is a great way to liven up boring coffee mornings. But... Well, I'm just not happy trying to fulfill my role as housewife, mum and mad cutesy bomber when I always have to play in these dirty brown overalls."
Patronising Friend: "Then why not choose a bomberman who exemplifies your domestic quest for that bluey-whiteness? Or perhaps a pastel shade..."
Housewife: (sigh) " If only..."
Patronising Friend: "Want to know my secret? When I reach the multi-player screen that decides whether each bomberman is human or CPU-controlled, I push SELECT to change my suit colour."
Housewife: "Hey, that's great! And simple, too! But what about the kids' laundry?"
Patronising Friend:"Ah, stuff it. The mucky sods should know how to use a washing machine by now. Besides, Mrs Cottersley here is gagging for a rematch."



This affects your flame colour, too.

Hidden Levels

The following Action Replay code for *SB2* unveiled two secret battle screens that I already knew existed from seeing an old copy of Japanese SNES bible *Famicom Tsushin*,. However, nobody came forward with the actual pad cheat at the time. Has it never been found? Enter
7E1C CD0x
to choose your level and, if x is A or B, you'll see two new multi-player environments. We printed similar codes for *Bomberman 3* just last month, but I've yet to hear from any pad hack who's worked out the cheat. Think back a couple of years and you may recall that Hudson even hid the multi-tap option on their Virtual Soccer with a cheat – do they want to deny us such blatantly useful things forever?

FIGHTING TALK

Gloves, detonators and wrap-around. They never see it coming.

The only way to see true *Bomberman* – if you're a fundamentalist like me – is to play it with a multi-tap, so perhaps the following examples of battle mode tactics will convince you to get one.

The Boot: A good way to use the Boot is to lay your bomb quietly, wait a moment before stepping back off it (so that others may not see, and therefore misjudge the fuse time remaining), and then slide it so that its blast range just catches the other player after you've ducked clear. Conversely, you should watch for panicked players who lay a bomb and slide it immediately. If you also possess a Boot power-up, this is the time to jump in and kick it straight back at them to catch them off-guard. A bomb sliding between two close players like this often results in a game of Chicken, seeing who bottles out first.

The Glove: *SB1*'s classic corridor trap is to punch a bomb behind your opponent and lay another immediately in front of them. However, the most cunning and deadly combination of power-ups enables the Glove/Detonator trick. For example, from the other side of the arena you can punch or throw your bomb over the outer wall – thus taking advantage of the wrap-around – and hit the detonator instantly, giving the poor fool standing by the opposite wall no time to react.

But look at this fellow. He'd have more luck at the top of the screen.

Not only has it returned, it's here to stay. Ladies and Gentlemen, comb your hair and give a big hand for What Cart? The essential SNES gaming directory.

NAME	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE/DESCRIPTION
3D Baseball	(JAP) Jaleco	SP19	63% Loaded to the gills with Japanese text, making it difficult to tell what's going on. (Unless you're Japanese, obv.)
100% Cotton	(JAP) Datam Polystar	SP21	79% Content trades off to style in this great-looking scrolling shoot-'em-up starring a broomstick-riding witch.
90 Minutes	(UK) Ocean	SP39	55% Disappointing footy title that pales in the face of competition from *FIFA '96* and (especially) *ISSD*.
Aaahh!!! Real Monsters	(UK)Viacom	SP38	65% A marginally entertaining three-character platformer that's worth a laugh if you can pick it up at a budget price.
Addams Family Values	(UK) Ocean	SP31	75% An open exploration game, featuring plenty of Wandering About™ and Getting Bored™.
Alcahest	(JAP) Halken/Square	SP18	69% Taking *Zelda* and making it harder must've looked good on paper. The execution is uninspired if competent.
Andre Agassi Tennis	(US) Technagic	SP22	52% Agassi might be able to pull Brooke Shields but his SNES game is crappy. Not a patch on *Super Tennis*, of course.
Animaniacs	(UK) Konami	SP26	28% Jon Nash said of this game: "Less a clever game based on a funny cartoon, more a grindingly tedious disaster." Ouch.
Ardy Lightfoot	(UK) Titus	SP29	83% A My First Platformer with cutesy graphics and predictable gameplay making it "fine for the young 'uns".
Astro Go! Go!	(JAP) Meldac	SP20	51% Amusing, *F-Zero* clone which reviewer Jon Davies disliked but of which Tony said "wasn't that bad actually."
Bassin's Black Bass	(US) Hot B	SP34	65% An original, relaxing, and surprisingly deep (sorry) fishing game. Yup, we said fishing game.
Batman Forever	(UK) Acclaim	SP36	61% A humourless, soulless game designed merely to fill boxes marked '*Batman Forever*'. Nice soundtrack, though.
Battle Cars	(US) Namco	SP19	73% Listen: weak two-player modes spoil racing games. And this *Mad Max*-esque effort has a very grotty one indeed.
Battle Pinball	(JAP) Banpresto	SP34	68% Pinball meets computer game designers and comes off worse. Bright colours don't make up for poor gameplay.
Beauty and the Beast	(UK) HudsonSoft	SP23	71% Lord knows how Hudson got the licence for a Disney game, but here it is and it's both pretty-looking and pretty dull.
Beavis and Butthead	(UK) Viacom	SP36	39% "This sucks my butt." "Yeah – ahuh – butt – ahuh huh." A truly offensive scrolly platformy beat-'em-uppy thing.
Big Hurt Baseball	(UK) Acclaim	SP39	70% A neat and tidy version of baseball with motion-captured graphics. But B-A-S-E-B-A-L-L? Give us *ISSD* any day.
Biker Mice from Mars	(UK) Konami	SP31	71% It tries so desperately to be *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* but fails on gameplay points. (The tacky Snickers license doesn't help.)
Blackhawk	(UK) Interplay	SP27	76% Pretender to the *Flashback* throne. Please, take careful note of the word 'pretender'.
Bonkers	(UK) Capcom	SP27	74% Cute platform fun. Can you say "kill the cute thing"? Like the cartoon with sub-*Animaniacs* film lampoons.
Boogerman	(UK) Interplay	SP32	56% Another. Tedious. Platform. Game. The novelty of super-powered farts and burps soon wears wafer thin.
Brain Lord	(US) Enix	SP25	81% Decent action RPG with some entertaining puzzly bits. It looks a bit wonky when compared to *Zelda III*, obviously.
Brandish	(US) Koei	SP34	53% More below-par RPG antics from the masters of under-par tat. Action-heavy *Soulblazer* wannabe, with nob graphics.
Breath of Fire	(US) Capcom/Square	SP24	80% The Super Play cover was better than the game, but it remains an absorbing, if repetitious on occasion, RPG. Hmm.
Breath Of Fire 2	(US) Marubeni/Capcom	SP41	81% Although it has undeniable flaws, if you're a hardcore pointy-hat *BOF2* is an essential purchase.
Buggs Bunny Rabbit Rampage	(US) Sunsoft	SP19	58% You'll have a hoot picking out the Looney Tunes characters in here, but the platforminess around them spoils the fun.
Cannon Fodder	(UK) Virgin	SP28	89% We don't really like Amiga games on *Super Play*, but this is one exception. Topper action-based wargaming all the way.
Caravan Shooting	(JAP) Hudsonsoft	SP37	52% A collection of old coin-ops converted in such a fashion that you'll believe your SNES is in fact an 8-bit machine.
Carrier Aces	(UK) Gametek	SP34	39% Japanese kamikaze pilots would be insulted by this. (If they hadn't all killed themselves.)
Castlevania: Vampire's Kiss	(UK) Konami	SP35	80% Not as good as the original, but it does its best to replicate doses of that classic *'Vania* playability.
Champions World Class Soccer	(UK) Acclaim	SP19	66% Endorsed by Ryan Giggs (in the days he could play), this is a typically below-parr 'soccer' game from the States.
Charles Barkley Shut Up and Jam!	(UK) Sony	SP28	73% Sony Imagesoft Shut Up and Write a Proper Basketball game, more like...
Choplifter III	(UK) Ocean	SP18	80% Blatantly riding the retro wave, Beam (*Shadowrun*) Software's shoot-'em-up sequel is limited but dreamy fun.
Chrono Trigger	(US) Square	SP37	**90%** A paperback RPG to Square's *Final Fantasy* hardback epic. Wil loves it, of course, but then he loves everything RPG-ish.
Civilisation	(US) Koei	SP41	88% Proof that appearances really can be deceptive. A totally absorbing, but very complicated game.
Clayfighter 2	(UK) Interplay	SP28	87% A pretty beat-'em-up that is, unfortunately, a total gimmick from start to finish. (Can't wait to see the M2 version, arf!)
Cutthroat Island	(UK) Acclaim	SP42	66% Fair to middling scrolling slash-'em-up that tries to incorporate new ideas, but falls a little flat.
Death and Return of Superman	(US) Sunsoft	SP25	29% Licence + scrolling beat-'em-up = dreadful tat. Supey would turn in his grave. Or would he? We haven't a clue, frankly.
Demolition Man	(UK) Acclaim	SP36	75% An inventive, unpredictable licence platformer. What? Yeah, Tony recommends the zip-lines level. Oh he's so ker-razeee.
Demon's Blazon	(JAP) Capcom	SP27	80% Show-stopping graphics and a great bulging sack full of neat touches in a game that's a teeny bit too easy.

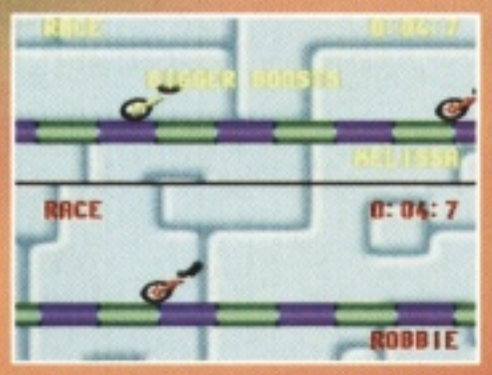
NAME	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE/DESCRIPTION
Dirt Racer SFX	(UK) Elite	SP31	61% A Super FX racing game and a pretty grim one at that. Not as good as this next feller...
Dirt Trax FX	(UK) Acclaim	SP38	77% Sculptured Software go Super FX potty once more to produce a natty motah-biking racer which lacks depth.
Donkey Kong Country	(UK) Nintendo	SP27	**90%** Ray-traced platform Kong fun that everyone got for Christmas, learning about gameplay/graphics the hard way.
DKC 2	(UK) Nintendo	SP40	82% A better game than the original, but not to an extent that would warrant an improved score – could do better.
Doom	(UK) Ocean	SP36	**92%** It is, as they say, *Doom* – but on the SNES. Most of the PC original's levels and features are present and correct.
Double Dragon V	(US) Tradewest	SP25	39% The first *Double Dragon* game was quite good. In the arcades. But part five on the SNES? Just look at the score.
Dragon	(UK) Virgin	SP21	88% More a clone of old beat-'em-ups such as *IK+* than *SFII*, and therefore not as enjoyable. Playable enough, though.
Dragon Ball Z 2	(JAP) Bandai	SP17	75% Though the score suggests an above average game, looking back on *DBZ2* it's little more than a dull, quirky beat-'em-up
Dragon Ball Z 3	(JAP) Bandai	SP27	70% *DBZ3* is to *DBZ2* what *DBZ2* was to *DBZ1*. Got that? Er, the series got better as it went on, but never brilliant.
Dragon View	(US) Kemco	SP35	68% An infuriatingly entertaining RPG awash with compounded minor flaws. Bit of a love it/bear it-type scenario, we reckon.
Earthbound	(US) Nintendo	SP35	88% A crude-looking but startlingly different and entertaining RPG set in childhood America. We'll love it forever.
Earthworm Jim	(UK) Virgin	SP29	**91%** He hasn't got a leg to stand on and he's got no backbone (*Dis-flaming-missed! – Ed*), but he's in a very fine platformer.
Earthworm Jim 2	(UK) Virgin	SP39	85% An excellent sequel albeit with perhaps fewer surprises on offer than that of the original *Jimmer*.
ESPN Speed World	(US) Sony	SP28	60% A depressingly dull racer, despite apparently having more options than God.
Excite Stage '95	(JAP) Epoch	SP34	77% An improvement over the original *ES*, but not one we'd recommend with the likes of *ISSD* and *FIFA* around.
Eye of the Beholder	(US) Capcom	SP21	52% Poor first-person-viewed *Dungeon Master* sequel which incurred the Might Wrath of the Zyster when he reviewed it.
Fatal Fury 2	(UJAP) Takara	SP19	79% Tired by its desperate strivance for membership of the *SFII* Club, Zy rightly judged this to be lacking that certain spark.
Fever Pitch	(UK) US Gold	SP32	78% A passable, meat-and-potatoes footy game. It's supposed to have a humorous twist, but we're buggered if we saw it.
FIFA	(UK) Electronic Arts	SP20	89% An enormous hit on the Mega Drive, this SNES conversion is an accurate one. Looking rather dated these days.
FIFA '96	(UK) Electronic Arts	SP37	84% So what do yez get fer yer '96-ness? Better graphics, tiny speech samples and some new options. Is that enough?
Fighter's History	(US) Data East	SP22	85% Blatant 'homage' to *SFII* and instigator of the famous Capcom vs Data East lawsuit. A very proficient clone in fact.
Final Stretch	(JAP) LOZC	SP19	73% Obscure F1 racing affair which boasted a DSP chip in order to calculate some clever 3D-esque views of the action.
Final Fantasy III	(US) Square Soft	SP26	**95%** Truly a God among RPGs, making yer average SNES title look about as appealing as an evening with Terry Wogan.
Final Fight Tough	(JAP) Capcom	SP43	49% Same old gameplay, but the challenge is a travesty. Capcom have become sloppy in their old age and need a slap.
The Firemen	(JAP) Human	SP29	75% A tricky squirt-'em-up that's taxing if not all that original. Run round, *Ghoul Patrol*-style, extinguish fires and rescue folk.
The Flintstones	(US) Taito	SP20	54% The plan: nick some bits from *Mario* and stick 'em together for our own game. The result: a tired, challengless example.
Foreman For Real	(UK) Acclaim	SP37	40% A licence with slick graphics and precious little in the way of gameplay. Fatty should sit down and shut up.
Frantic Flea	(UK) Gametek	SP39	29% Painfully, nay, excruciatingly annoying platformer albeit with nattily produced graphics.
Front Mission	(JAP) Square	SP31	88% Isometric turn-based stategy wargame with enough pace and action to make a two-hour battle just fly by.
Front Mission Gun Hazard	(JAP) Square	SP43	45% *Fun Hazard* more like. Devoid of action, tactics, playability or challenge. This is the Dusty Bin of mecha gaming.
Full Throttle Racing	(UK) Gametek	SP26	55% Pretty grim racing game offering a weird mix of Mode 7 jetskiing and traditional motorbiking action.
Ghoul Patrol	(UK) JVC	SP30	82% Not up to the standard of its prequel, *Zombies Ate My Neighbours*, but pretty close. Good B-movie-parody fun.
Goemon 2	(JAP) Konami	SP17	**90%** Sequel to groundbreaking Legend Of Mystical Ninja with a heavier action slant but all its playability and charm.
Goemon 4	(JAP) Konami	SP41	82% While showing signs of age, *Goeman 4* nevertheless provides an Aladdin's Cave of 'only in Japan' videogaming.
Hagane	(UK) Virgin	SP32	74% A surprise UK release, this platform actioner from Hudson Soft is very Japanese, and entertaining and tough with it.
Hammerin' Harry	(JAP) Irem	SP23	77% If we had a hammer we'd hammer all over this game for not living up to what was expected from it. Oh yes.
Hardball 3	(US) Accolade	SP24	69% Let's make another baseball game! Let's make it similar to the others! Let's get the general thumbs-down from *Super Play*!
Hebereke's Popoon	(UK) Marubeni	SP27	84% Addictive *Puyo*-twist with mad fings. What's a popoon? What's going on with the seemingly random features?
Humans	(UK) Gametek	SP18	70% Uses one of the worst dreign approaches possible, the blatant rip-off (*Lemmings*) and stumbles along determinedly.
Hungry Dinosaurs	(UK) Sunsoft	SP40	35% Has all the visual hallmarks of a classic puzzler, but just doesn't cut it. Mildly entertaining.
Illusion of Gaia	(US) Nintendo	SP26	88% Well-produced pseudo-sequel to *Soulblazer* with a great atmosphere to boot. Far from very challenging, though.
Indiana Jones	(UK) JVC	SP30	29% A grim platform exploration affair which embodies everything that's wrong with licensed games.
Inspector Gadget	(US) Nintendo	SP18	71% Yes, Nintendo did release this – perhaps they were short on products, 'cos this is a less than glorious platformer.

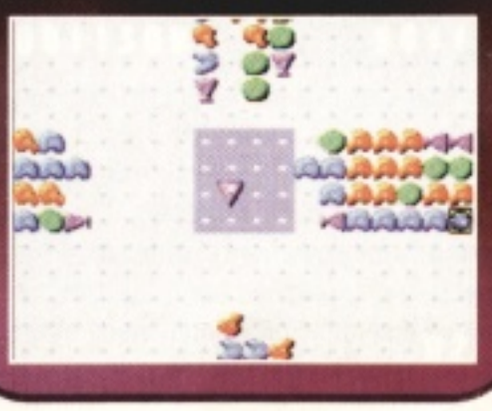
NAME	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE/DESCRIPTION
International Superstar Soccer	(UK) Konami	SP30	82% Blimey! A soccer game that scores over 75%! Great dynamic sprites and quick action make this highly enjoyable.
ISS Deluxe	(UK) Konami	SP38	94% Improved over the original in just about every single respect, this goes to prove Konami's continued mastery of the SNES.
James Pond 3	(UK) US Gold	SP32	77% A *Mario* rip-off which came along about two years too late. It has its clever bits but feels like a clone from start to finish.
Jelly Boy	(UK) Ocean	SP25	61% Frustrating platformer whose selling point is that your character can morph into different objects. Yawn...
Fever Pitch	(UK) US Gold	SP32	78% A passable, meat-and-potatoes footy game. It's supposed to have a humorous twist, but we're buggered if we saw it.
The Jetsons	(US) Taito	SP23	76% The sort of platformer that Tony was always lumbered with. This had one or two pleasant surprises in store, though.
Jim Power	(US) Electrobrain	SP23	70% Imagine the most garish European-produced Amiga game possible with a clever 3D glasses bit. That's *JP* alright.
Joe and Mac 2	(US) Data East	SP21	80% The graphics are jolly, by jingo, and the jungly caperings entertaining, but... there's... something... missing.
The Jungle Book	(UK) Virgin	SP21	82% One of two jungle-based platformers dumped on Tony in issue 21. Blimey, we were terrible to him in those days.
Jungle Strike	(UK) E/Arts	SP33	83% Nothing new for *Desert Strike* fans, but a worthy alternative for the rest of us. (Tony hates the series, for what it matters.)
Jurassic Park 2	(UK) Sony	SP27	83% A tough, varied game with a shade too much standard platforminess to make it a classic.
Justice League	(UK) Acclaim	SP34	30% A dreadfully implemented, poorly planned and unplayable beat-'em-up. Why do these things get made?
Kid Klown in Crazy Chase	(US) Kemco	SP27	80% If the entire game was up to the standard of its graphics (they're brill), this would be a classic game. They're aren't.
Kick Off 3	(UK) Anco/Imagineer	SP20	91% Did you know that Anco comes from ANil Gupta (its MD) COmpany? You didn't? We overrated this one incidentally.
Kikikaikai 2	(JAP) Natsume	SP23	79% The sort of game that'll always find a place on our cover, this is fun, very Japanese, but too much like its predecessor.
Killer Instinct 2 *Coin-op*	(UK) Midway/Nintendo	SP43	91% A stunner in every sense. If all sequels were this much improved, the world would be a better place.
King Of The Monsters 2	(JAP) Takara	SP17	74% Neo Geo conversion which sets Godzilla-esque monsters against one another in varied settings. Very limited action.
Kirby's Avalanche	(US) Nintendo	SP33	91% *Puyo Puyo* finally goes west in the form of the pink blobster. One of the most addictive and downright fun games ever.
Kirby's Tea Shop	(JAP) Nintendo	SP28	86% Er, sorry, that's *Tee Shot*, actually. It's an odd little golf-type game for odd little gamesplaying people.
Knights of the Round	(US) Capcom	SP21	51% One of the games which started asking questions of Capcom's output, this is a very run-of-the-mill scrolly slasher.
Legend	(US) Seika	SP22	55% Slick but dull slasher. (So baffled, was the designer, by its score that he felt the need to visit us and say so.
Lemmings 2	(UK) Psygnosis	SP26	88% Repeatedly kill even more cute (or rather save) little fluffy creatures in yet more interesting ways.
Lester The Unlikely	(US) Nintendo	SP10	52% Another unlikely (yeah, sorry) Nintendo release that had all the charm of a spent teabag.
Lethal Enforcers	(UK) Konami	SP17	69% Top *Reservoir Dog*sage awaits in this conversion of Konami's exciting but short-lived coin-op blaster.
Liberty Or Death	(US) Koei	SP22	41% Why does Zy do it? Another wargame that withered and wilted under his unflinching glare.
The Lion King	(UK) Virgin	SP29	82% A polished, if not all that innovative platform licence of a film who's name eludes me.
Loderunner Twin	(JAP) T&E Soft	SP24	56% Such potential. Such lack of the finer points of gameplay. Ex-editor James Leach didn't go a packet on this platformer.
Lord of the Rings	(UK) Interplay	SP29	52% A huge, detailed, wandering game ruined by gaping gameplay gaffs. (Some of the music's quite nice, though.)
Lufia and the Fortress of Doom	(US) Taito	SP18	79% If Japanese-produced RPGs work to a template then *Lufia* exemplifies it. While generally sound its sooo predictable.
Madden NFL '95	(UK) E/Arts	SP26	84% Nothing's really changed since *Madden '94*, which isn't really a bad thing, of course. (Er, so long as you enjoyed it.)
Magic Boy	(UK) JVC	SP21	75% Lacks the finesse of its Japanese counterparts but has a fair stab at shaking some puzzly platformy stuff.
Mario's Time Machine	(UK) Mindscape	SP17	60% One of the only 'edutainment' titles on the SNES. Hardly surprising, really: gamers want to be entertained not taught.
Mario's Picross	(UK) Nintendo	SP39	77% Quirky puzzler based on the theme of considered deduction. Chipping away pictures has never been, well, done, actually.
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein	(US) Sony	SP28	69% Well she isn't pretty, but... there's no need to be personal. Bad platformer of an okay film of an excellent book.
The Mask	(UK) THQ	SP38	70% Marginally shallow platform licence fun. Morphs a-plenty ensure variety if not thrills.
Mechwarrior 3050	(UK) Marubeni	SP28	77% Power-crazed destruction on two legs, with some stunning animation but a depressingly short lifespan.
Mega-Lo-Mania	(UK) Imagineer	SP19	81% Engrossing wargame that endeared itself to the Leachster for some reason. Impressive use of speech though.
Mega Man 7	(UK) Marubeni	SP38	79% A reasonable update of the NES and Game Boy instalments of the series, which lacks the spark needed to make it shine.
Mega Man X	(US) Capcom	SP17	88% A fine spin-off from the NES games, which dated horribly upon the release of Nintendo's far superior *Super Metroid*.
Mega Man X2	(US) Capcom	SP30	80% Loaded with Capcom's C-4 co-processor, we expected more from *X2*. It's merely more of the same with a couple of frills.
Mega Man X3	(JAP) Capcom	SP42	70% Capcom are cashing in. It's a good game, but there are none of the new ideas we were hoping for in part two.
Metal Marines	(UK) Namcot/Mindscape	SP18	80% Turn-based isometric-viewed other-hyphenated-stuff wargame which proves a lot more shallow than expected.
Michael Jordan	(UK) E/Arts	SP29	83% A platform game based on basketball. The expected ice hockey flight sim sequel never appeared, strangely.

NAME	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE/DESCRIPTION
Mickey's Magical Quest	(UK) Capcom	SP3	89% Super-slick platformer with graphics to make a mess over. What a pity that it's all over so soon.
Mickey and Minnie	(UK) Capcom	SP27	73% We don't understand the release of this – apart from having a two-player mode it's almost identical to *MMQ*. (And easier.)
Mickey Mania	(UK) Sony	SP26	87% There've been few technically stunning SNES games to come out of the UK, but this is one. Plays fine, looks amazing.
Mickey's Ultimate Challenge	(US) Hi-Tech	SP20	54% One for the younger viewers, as Hi-Tech would be sure to claim. Simple platform bits give way to tedious mind games.
Micro Machines	(UK) Sony	SP26	83% An overhead racer that looks bad, sounds awful, but plays wonderfully. Shame about the presentation.
Micro Machines 2	(UK) Ocean	SP39	88% A great big fat extra wodge of what made the original such a superlative racer. Some of the tracks with drive you nuts.
Mortal Kombat 2	(UK) Acclaim	SP24	90% Realising their grave error, Acclaim brought just about everything across from the coin-op in this sequel. It's fun.
Mortal Kombat 3	(UK) Acclaim	SP37	85% A well-balanced coin-op conversion that would have benefitted from a tad more attention to detail.
Mr Tuff	(UK) Ocean	SP32	74% A few more sprites fall into Ocean's platform game machine. A squirrel, though... why?
Muscle Bomber	(JAP) Capcom	SP22	78% Enormously entertaining wrestling game (in the short term), with skillo four-player mode and great graphics.
NBA Give 'N' Go	(UK) Konami	SP38	85% Arcade-style b-ball title using a clever mix of Mode 7 and jumbo-sized sprites. Not quite as much fun as *NBA Jam*.
NBA Jam Tournament Edition	(UK) Acclaim	SP30	**90%** A few well-placed tweaks on the superb original, NBA Jam. Fast, and even more arcadey –top for two players.
NBA Live '95	(UK) Electronic Arts	SP26	84% A good basketball game that calls for a fair bit of hoop-shooting skill.
NBA Live '96	(UK) E/Arts	SP37	78% Good basketball fun, but this is more of a sim and not up to *NBA Jam*'s-hoop-burning standards.
New Horizons	(US) Koei	SP28	62% "Normal people should flee in terror." Said Zy to this poor sea-bound strategy sleep-inducer.
Newman-Haas Indycar	(UK) Acclaim	SP27	73% Non-mode 7 racer! Nigel Mansell! Dagen Haas? Pretty good sim of Formula One's boring US cousin.
NFL Quarterback Club '96	(UK) Acclaim	SP40	89% Boasting more depth than *Madden* and now significantly improved both on the field and presentation-wise.
NHL '94	(UK) E/Arts/Ocean	SP22	89% For some reasons, ice hockey is one of the easiest sports to make into a playable game, something this game proves ably.
NHL '96	(UK) E/Arts	SP37	**90%** *NHL* gets better every year, but this isn't a viable replacement for *NHL '95* owners.
NHL Stanley Cup	(US) Nintendo	SP18	79% Before doing *Doom* for Williams, Sculptured did this Mode 7-mad ice hockey sim for Nintendo. And it ain't bad.
Nosferatu	(JAP) Seika	SP27	75% The banana peel was replaced with a severe lack of originality. The game still tripped over it.
Obelix	(UK) Infogrames	SP36	60% Average. Run-of-the-mill. Boring. Flawed. True to the looks of the original *Asterix* books, enlivened by okay sub-games
Operation Europe	(US) Koei	SP24	46% If you bought your SNES to play wargames then you might squeeze something out of this. Don't bother otherwise.
Ogre Battle	(US) Enix	SP34	80% A fantasy strategy game that's fun if not altogether varied, but employs a solid real-time feature.
Pac-Attack	(UK) Namco/Nintendo	SP21	69% It didn't take long for the *Puyo Puyo* clones to begin arriving and this is a spot-on example of how to not get it quite right.
Pac-Man 2	(US) Namco	SP35	70% A frustrating, picky platform game that's nearly good enough to get away with it.
Panel De Pon	(JAP) Nintendo	SP43	**90%** Brimming with options, heady with playability and steeped in challenge – this turns minutes into hours into days.
Parodius 3	(JAP) Konami	SP41	83% As slick as ever and truly funny in places, but nothing innovative. Just timeless blasting gameplay.
The Pagemaster	(UK) Virgin	SP29	61% Oh please, someone mess up that Culkin kid's face. Speccy kid with books in pointless platformer.
Phantom 2040	(UK) Viacom	SP38	78% Pacing, storyline and depth drag this licence platformer out of the 60% band.
Pac-Man 2	(US) Namco	SP35	70% A frustrating, picky platform game that's nearly good enough to get away with it.
PGA Tour '96	(UK) T•HQ	SP42	85% Lots of options, plenty of holes and a steep learning curve make for a top notch simulation.
Pinball Dreams	(UK) Tecmagik	SP17	76% What should have been a greatly-improved version of the Amiga hit turned out to be shoddily implemented and flawed.
Pink Goes To Hollywood	(UK) Activision	SP27	79% A bit of a mystery release, this, considering The Pink Panther went out with flares (again). Lightweight, floaty platform fun.
Power Drive	(US) US Gold	SP28	69% A bad Amiga mini-racing game makes its way to the SNES. Nobody cheers.
Pac-Man 2	(US) Namco	SP35	70% A frustrating, picky platform game that's nearly good enough to get away with it.
Populous 2	(UK) Imagineer	SP23	87% What is it with Imagineer and God-type games? Another of those Great-If-You-Like-That-Sort-Of-Thing™s.
Porky Pig's Haunted Holiday	(UK) Acclaim	SP40	72% A simple, formulaic platformer for kids that doesn't pretend to be anything else.
Primal Rage	(UK) T/Warner	SP36	60% An average conversion of an average arcade beat-'em-up. With big dinosaurs.
Putty Squad	(UK) Ocean	SP32	89% Be like this, other platform games. Being, literally, putty, your character can do things other platform heroes can't.
Puzzle Bobble	(JAP) Taito	SP34	84% Like all great puzzle games this is a simple idea which is especially fun in two-player mode.
Ren and Stimpy: Time Warp	(UK) THQ	SP28	51% Say this: "Steeempy, you eediot! You wrote a dull scrolling beeeat-'em-up!" and avoid this awful offering.
Revolution X	(UK) Acclaim	SP41	45% It belongs in an arcade where you can blast away for ten minutes and then play something else.

NAME	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE/DESCRIPTION
Raccoon Rascal	(JAP) NCS/Masiya	SP21	79% Obscure puzzler starring arguably the cutest critter to ever appear in a game. Especially fun in two-player mode.
Rainbow Bell Adventures	(UK) Konami	SP18	70% The score's perhaps a little harsh on this distinctive two-player platformer, but it's nonetheless below-par Konami.
Ranma 1/2: Hard Battle	(JAP) Rumic Soft	SP21	79% All the *Ranma* faves are present in what proves to be a rewarding beat-'em-up. Still some way short of *SFII*, mind.
Rise of the Phoenix	(US) Koei	SP32	46% A trudging historical battle strategy game that's inaccurate historically and as a representation of war strategies.
Rise of the Robots	(UK) Acclaim	SP29	33% One of the most expensive, over-hyped disappointments since, erm, the last one. Over-rated at 33%.
Robotrek	(US) Enix	SP31	72% A polished but unoriginal RPG, just like too many games to come out of Enix. The robot-manufacturing bit is clever.
Romance of the 3 Kingdoms III	(US) Koei	SP20	67% And still the Zyster played insipid Koei wargames, finding this particular example suited solely to hardcore anorak fans.
Romance Of The 3 Kingdoms V	(US) Koei	SP37	68% Armchair anorak strategy that could be a lot better and frankly involves little romance.
Samurai Spirits	(JAP) Takara	SP28	84% A beat-'em-up that isn't quite as diverse as you'd expect from a 24meg game.
Sea Quest DSV	(UK) THQ	SP30	74% A shoot-cum-swim-cum-budget-'em-up. Though underwater thrills may work okay on the telly, they don't here.
Secret of Evermore	Square	SP39	81% A fine action RPG whose faults come horribly to light if you've played *Mana*.
Separation Anxiety	(UK) Acclaim	SP40	58% A plodding, directionless scrolling beat-'em-up that's fun in two-player mode, but does Spidey few favours.
Sink or Swim	(UK) Titus	SP31	55% Repetitive *Lemmings*-style save-'em-up that's about as interesting as a Sunday afternoon on the Mary Celeste.
Smash Ball	(JAP) Charactersoft	SP23	82% "The Surprise Two-Player *Breakout* Clone Hit Of '95!" as our pals on *TOTAL!* might say. This is a fabby little thing.
The Smurfs	(UK) Infogrames	SP25	90% Challenging platform game stuffed to overflowing with little scary blue people who smile too much.
Soccer Kid	(UK) Ocean	S18	84% A daft idea it might be, but this is entertaining stuff (despite looking like so many typical Amiga games of the day).
Soccer Shootout	(US) Capcom	SP24	80% While hardly mouldbresaking, the Western version of *Excite Stage '94* is a playable silicon take on The Beautiful Game.
Soldiers of Fortune	(US) Spectrum Holobyte	SP18	89% Zy thinks this is fabbage, while Tony believes it to be nothing special at all. Essentially it's *Gauntlet* for the '90s.
Space Ace	(UK) Empire	SP17	58% Oh dear, another game that got us into 'trouble' because we gave it a mediocre score. Sorry, Empire, but this is nobby.
Space Invaders	(JAP) Taito	SP21	40% *Space Invaders. Space Invaders. Space Invaders. Space Invaders. Space Invaders. Space Invaders. Space Invaders. Space Invaders.*
Sparkster	(UK) Konami	SP25	89% It's an original, imaginative, entertaining, and fun platformer. Blimey!
Spawn	(UK) Acclaim	SP40	56% Just the sort of game you'll ponder over and then walk away from when it's skulking in the bargain bins for a tenner.
Spectre	(UK) Gametek	SP21	**90%** Horrendously overrated (even EMAP mags slagged it off) two-player polygonised tank combat game. 72% more like!
Speed Racer	(UK) Accolade	SP22	65% Did we ever tell you about the difficulty we had getting a review copy from Accolade? Were they scared of us?.
Spiderman	(UK) Acclaim	SP31	77% A rather linear but pleasing platformer featuring our arachnid ally.
Spiderman & The X-Men	(UK) Acclaim	S22	72% Tatty-looking platform beat-'em-up which fails to make best use of those soupy Marvel characters.
Spike McFang	(US) Bulletproof	SP24	82% Call us suckers for invention, but we couldn't resist Spike and his hat-luzzing action RPG antics, however short-lived.
Sports Illustrated Championship	(US) Malibu	SP19	70% This two-games-on-one-cart (American footy and baseball) package was a nice idea, but poorly realised.
Star Trek Bridge Sim	(UK) Interplay	SP29	77% A stunted, unenjoyable Trekker game, with the saving grace of being fairly well executed.
Star Trek: The Next Generation	(US) Spectrum Holobyte	SP21	39% Lots of pitiful subgames cobbled together to form something that even the saddest Trekker would struggle to enjoy.
Stargate	(UK) Acclaim	SP32	60% Good films make mediocre games. Atrocious films make... oh dear.
Street Racer	(UK) Ubi-Soft	SP25	**91%** A *Mario Kart*-style racer that pips its predecessor to the post. Odd split-screen four-player mode.
Super Battletank 2	(US) Absolute	SP19	43% Military hardware fetishist Cam Winstanley reviewed this in *Super Play* and even he was distinctly non-plussed with it.
Super Bomberman 3	(UK) Virgin	SP37	89% Excellent new multi-player and single-player touches keep The Most Addictive Game Ever™ going strong.
Super Chase HQ	(JAP) Taito	SP19	56% Loosely based on the coin-op of a similar name, this is strictly Mode 7 racing by numbers. Hugely disappointing stuff.
Super Cup Soccer 2	(JAP) Jaleco	SP19	60% If we had a tenner for all the weak footy games like this, we'd be at the pub now, not writing about them.
Super Drift Out	(JAP) Visco	SP34	45% An overhead racing game that, despite a course designer, is much too dull.
Super Dropzone	(UK) Eurocom	SP26	87% It's *Defender* all over again! Actually, it's *Dropzone* all over again, but that all amounts to the same thing.
Super Godzilla	(UK) Toho	SP25	39% Dreadful and boring stomp-'em-up. Destroy cities. Fight monsters. Don't buy this game.
Super Ice Hockey	(UK) Sunsoft	SP24	55% Like so many 'Super'-suffixed games, this fails to do the term any justice. But then *Average Ice Hockey* would be a bit silly.
Super International Cricket	(UK) Nintendo	SP33	77% That obvious problem of cricket not working on a computer shines through.
Super Metroid	(UK) Nintendo	SP20	**92%** This is the reason Gumpei Yokoi still holds his head high after the disappointing Vitual Boy. Buy this game. Buy two copies.
Super Morph	(UK) Sony	SP30	86% Intriguing puzzle-orientated fun straight from the Amiga. The hero morphs between states in a platform adventure.

NAME	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE/DESCRIPTION
Super Ninja Kun	(JAP) Jaleco	SP25	68% A pretty, occasionally enjoyable game that plays like the Encyclopedia Britannica.
Super Pinball: Behind The Mask	(JAP) Meldac	SP19	73% "Tony, would you like to review this nice-looking but dull pinball sim?" "No, but no other bugger's going to...".
Super Punch Out!!	(UK) Nintendo	SP27	**90%** Original and surprisingly top boxing game! Cartoony looks and plenty of skills needed to overcome a variety of opponents.
Super Return of the Jedi	(UK) JVC	SP30	79% A huge but repetitive platformer just like so many others. Despite faithful graphics the film's atmosphere isn't recreated.
Super Street Fighter II	(JAP) Capcom	SP23	**96%** Although most SNES-owning hardcore *SF* enthusiasts prefer *Turbo*, this remains one hell of a beat-'em-up.
Super Troll Islands	(UK) Gametek	SP20	70% The idea's pretty straightforward – colour in the platform backdrops – the graphics are cacky. Overall it's basic gaming.
Super Turrican	(UK) Ocean	SP31	84% A short journey into the depths of a classic floppy title, with more besides.
Suzuka 8 Hours	(JAP) Namcot	SP19	59% Without the sit-on bikes of the coin-op, but *with* some horribly unwelcoming gameplay, this is best left alone.
Syndicate	(UK) Ocean	SP26	80% Unfortunately it's been cut down for the SNES, but it's still the isometric strategy game of the gods.
T2: Judgement Day	(UK) Acclaim/LJN	SP19	52% The only SNES game with a naked Arnie sprite – but hardly worthy of attention because of it, we hope you'll agree.
TAO Batman & Robin	(UK) Konami	SP25	80% A haphazard mish-mash of gaming styles that only just come together.
TAO Mighty Max	(UK) Sony	SP28	83% Cartoon licence and a youngster in a baseball cap make for... a surprisingly good strategy platformer.
Tetris Battle Gaiden	(JAP) Bullet Proof	SP18	86% Excellent reworking of the *Tetris* concept with magic spells, cute characters, the lot. Sterling straight *Tetris* mode, too.
Theme Park	(UK) Ocean	SP32	**91%** An excellent management sim from Bullfrog. Tough to get into but ultimately massively rewarding.
Time Cop	(UK) JVC	SP34	15% Appalling platform drudgery with no trace of gameplay. Flawed in every respect and kicked deservedly in by our Zy.
Time Trax	(UK) Malibu/T•HQ	SP20	73% Arriving at a time when T•HQ's rep was at an all-time low, this was a minor revelation for them. Not bad at all.
Tin Star	(US) Nintendo	SP33	61% A set of varied game styles building a rather linear, boring western. Not one we'd recommend.
Tintin In Tibet	Infogrames	SP39	25% Super-faithful graphics meet gameplay of the pumpular persuasion to grim effect.
Tiny Toons Wild & Wacky Sports	(UK) Konami	SP25	78% *Track And Field* 'update' for up to five players which only comes alive with that full player quota, frustratingly.
Toy Story	(UK) T•HQ	SP43	79% *Toy Story* marked a new high point on the Mega Drive, but on the SNES it graphically loses out to *DKC2* every time.
Troy Aikman NFL Football	(UK) E/Arts	SP26	77% If you know nothing about American footy, you're doomed to fail. No, at life in general.
True Lies	(UK) Acclaim	SP30	74% A carelessly-planned *Smash TV*-viewed explorer. Plenty of Arnie-esque blasting, but it's all a bit predictable.
Turbo Toons	(UK) Empire	SP36	42% Repetitive licence racing abound. There are no cars, just cartoon characters trundling and weaving, dalek-style.
Turn And Burn	(US) Accolade	SP20	71% Neat presentation fails to hide what is essentially a paper-thin flight sim/shoot-'em-up hybrid.
Ultima VI	(US) FCI	SP22	45% The Ultima series may be big on the PC, but this instalment made us gag. Notable for its odd, skewed overhead perspective.
Ultimate Parodius	(UK) Konami	SP27	85% A tribute to the original *Parodius*, though it doesn't show too many improvements.
Unirally	(UK) Nintendo	SP29	85% Acclaimed by everyone (Pope included), but unfortunately not as close to Godliness as his Holiness suggests.
Urban Strike	T•HQ	SP39	75% Retains that fine *Strike* playability but with clunky scrolling and stop-start gameplay.
Vortex	(UK) Sony	SP26	**90%** Super FX transforming battle-suit destruction makes for some of the best fun you can have with a torpedo.
Warlock	(UK) Acclaim	SP31	68% A bog-standard platformer, relying on spells to give it that vital spark. And they don't.
WeaponLord	(UK) Ocean	SP36	75% A below-par Street Fighter II crib with, believe it or not, some weapons but obviously no gore.
Wildsnake	(US) S/Holobyte	SP29	70% *Tetris*-inspired drop-'em-down puzzler with snakes of various lengths and colours.
Wolfenstein 3D	(UK) Imagineer	SP17	78% Before *Doom* – but on the SNES there was this: its simplistic forebear which offered absorbing, if short-lived, gameplay
World Heroes 2	(JAP) Takara	SP22	80% Takara have another bash at beating SFII and come off quite respectably. The feel's not quite right but it's smile-worthy.
Wolverine – Adamantium Rage	(UK) Acclaim	SP29	60% Apart from the brilliantly animated main sprite,there's absolutely nothing that distinguishes it at all.
World Masters Golf	(UK) Virgin	SP35	80% By no means perfect, but your best bet for golf on the SNES. Looks are acceptable and controls surprisingly pleasant.
WWF Raw	(UK) Acclaim	SP27	84% Theatrical WWF violence with knobs on, beating Royal Rumble. It's still all a bit silly, though.
WWF Wrestlemania	(UK) Acclaim	SP38	84% An amusing, if vaguely repetitive grappler. Only six WWF stars but plenty of silly moves.
X_Kaliber 2097	(US) ACtivision	SP20	68% Platform hack-'em-up most memorable for its 'real band' music (it's pumpy) and a villain by the name of Spuke.
X-Men Apocalypse	(JAP) Capcom	SP29	52% SNES rule 183: All *X-Men* games are humdrum, horizontally-scrolling beat-'em-ups. Alphabetical order, mind.
Yoshi's Island	(JAP) Nintendo	SP36	**94%** Yoshi takes the lead in what at first appears to be the best *Mario* game yet. It's certainly close between this and *SMW*.
Zoku: The Legend Of Bishin	(JAP) Magifact	SP19	58% The idea's fab (drive somewhere and have a big fight), but the driving bit is confusing and the fighting horribly limited.





FINAL FANTASY FORUM

"Can you do it? The 9,999 Hit Point Strike?" This month's Forum entertains your unadulterated S&M fantasies (that's, er, Shopping and Magic, natch).

Marcus Spencus

Ah, the sights and smells of *Evermore*'s Nobilia market. The only way to negotiate this section fully is with a pen and paper (boooring!) so we thought we'd save you the chore. A few stalls may change their wares slightly depending on when you shop, but this set-up should serve as a general guide and comparison.

(1) Spice for 4 Rice or 4 Pots
(2) Rice for 3 Jewels
(3) Fish (recovers health) for 30 Jewels
(4) Rice for 6 Jewels
(5) Souvenir Spoon For 2 Spice
(6) Magic Gourd for Chocobo Egg
(7) Golden Jackal for 5 Spice or 2 Chickens
(8) Amulet of Annihilation for 30 Rice
(9) Centurion Cape for Jade Disk
(10) Armour Polish for Silver Sheath
(11) Ceramic Pots for 2 Rice
(12) Rice for 9 Jewels
(13) Bead for 12 Jewels
(14) Tapestries for 3 Beads
(15) Perfume for 3 Spice
(16) Spice for 2 Beads or 3 Pots
(17) Chicken for 1 Spice plus 2 Rice
(18) Bureau De Change
(19) Bead for 10 Jewels
(20) Bead for 1 Rice plus 3 Jewels
(21) Ruby Heart for Moxa Stick OR Tapestry plus Scarab plus Limestone
(22) Centurion Helm for Jackal plus 10 Spice
(23) Scarab for Spice plus 2 Perfume
(24) Limestone for 4 Spice plus 2 Beads
(25) Jade Disk for 3 Chickens plus 3 Beads
(26) Sun Stone for Limestone plus 5 Rice
(27) Moxa Stick for 2 Chickens plus Scarab plus 12 Spice
(28) Appraisal for 5 Jewels
(29) Silver Sheath for Jackal plus 10 Spices OR Sunstone
(30) Ra Gloves for Moxa Stick

Where possible you should always trade in common items rather than Charms, but we'll leave you to look for the best deals. The entrepreneurs among you may note that it's even possible to make money (by trading large quantities of rice between Stall 2 and Stall 28, for instance).

Before you leave Nobilia completely, make sure you have the following spare items to take advantage of Gothica's markets:

- 30 Rice (for a Staff of Life)
- 3 or more Amulets of Annihilation (for superior armour)
- A Scarab and a Jackal (for the Oracle Bone)
- 17 Perfumes and 15 Beads (for the Thug's Cloak and Chocobo Egg)

Now that I've finally got around to playing *Evermore* I must admit that I didn't see much in it, but the Forum will happily answer any questions regarding its stickier problems. We're interested in hearing from you about hidden spell locations; and especially any glitches and bugs you've encountered, so that we can warn other players (Barrie Joseph, I hate to tell you this...).

A big hand this month to Steve Allen, Mathieu Decodts, Johan Gerrets of Holland, Huw from Newport, Lisa D (again), and Reema Al-Malik of Dubai. Want to join in, share your tips, or just hideously stuck on a Square game? Then write your message on a trilobite, warp back in time to the Silurian era and hide it in the sedimentary rock that will one day be eroded to make way for...

FINAL FANTASY FORUM
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Rings and things

'Where can I get a Relic Ring in *FFIII*?' asks Toby of Hove, among others. "With your equip list tip I can see the ghosts on the Doma Train wear one, but you can't take it off them."

There's only one to be found in the game, and that's in a hidden chest in Jidoor. Look for the three 'rotating' doors in Owser's cellar and explore behind them, to the left. Alternatively, use Ragnarok to metamorph the Veterans of Kefka's Tower until you get one.

The benefits of the Relic Ring are debatable. Equipping it effectively turns your character undead ("makes body cold"): it thus guards against instant death spells (Doom, Condemned etc. will heal you to full), but all-party Cures cause damage and it's impossible to revive the wearer during battle.

One final question: has anyone actually SEEN the Paladin Ring? Because we no longer believe it exists, and we know that many of you don't either. Take the cartridge apart with an Action Replay, you won't find it listed with the other items. Along with the resurrection of General Leo, Cid as a playable character and the special end sequence, this may be the last great *FF* rumour laid to rest.

PROFILES

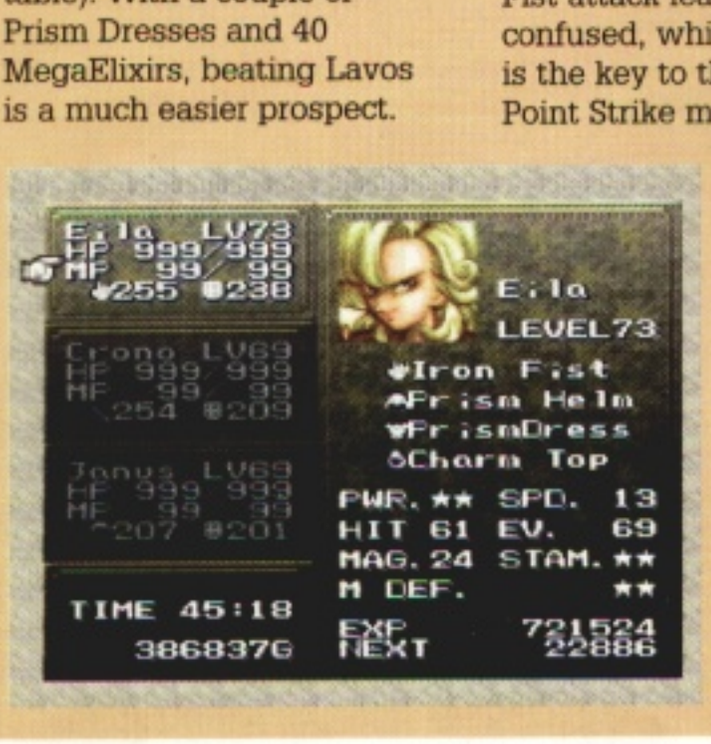
AYLA

The big chief of Ioka Village, the fiercest warrior – and possibly the most fashionably swinging cave woman in prehistory, with a wardrobe by One Million Years BC and a theme tune that could have carried her down Carnaby Street thirty years ago. So why is she the favourite of so many players?

Variety, probably. 'Charm' is Ayla's fifth Single Tech, and should be learnt as quickly as possible. It allows her to steal special items from monsters, including some of the best gear in the game (see our table). With a couple of Prism Dresses and 40 MegaElixirs, beating Lavos is a much easier prospect.

You can then improve her chances of stealing by pairing her with Marle and learning the cheeky little Dual Tech called 'Twin Charm'. Finally, take Marle's pendant to unlock the crested doors of Bangor Dome in 2300 AD and you'll find the Wallet and Charm Top accessories. With the latter, it should be easy for Ayla alone to steal from bosses. The only problem now is that you'll want to keep her in your party all the time...

Although the promotional material shows her carrying a club, Ayla never fights with anything but her bare hands. However, it's not widely known that her ordinary Fist is upgraded to Iron Fist around level 73, and later becomes Bronze Fist. An Iron Fist attack leaves enemies confused, while Bronze Fist is the key to that 9,999 Hit Point Strike mentioned in our programmer's end sequence – a critical hit inflicts maximum damage on any enemy.



Building your experience to this sort of world-class level isn't a ten minute job, however...

Monster	Charmed Prize
Alien	Shield, Magic Tab
Azala	Magic Tab
Bantam Imp	Alloy Blade
Beast	Rainbow Helm
Black Tyrano	Power Tab
Blob	Magic Ring, Barrier
Blue Beast	Mermaid Cap
Debugger	Elixir
Display	Elixir
Evilweevil	DreamGun, Feather
Flea Plus	Flea Vest
Flyclops	Gold Stud
Fly Trap	DreamBow, Petal
Fossil Ape	MegaElixir, Lapis
Gargoyle	Big Hand
Giga Gaia	Speed Tab
Giga Mutant	Wall Ring (upper)
Giga Mutant	Hit Ring (lower)
Gigasaur	Ruby Armor, Barrier
Golem	Magic Tab
Goon	Nova Armor, Elixir
Great Ozzie	OzziePants
Incognito	Muscle Ring
Lavos Spawn1	Elixir x 2 (Death Peak)
Lavos Spawn 2	Safe Helm (shell)
Lavos Spawn 2	Haste Helm (head)
Magus	MegaElixir (2nd battle)
Mammon M.	MegaElixir
Man Eater	Pearl Edge
Mega Mutant	Elixir (upper)
Mega Mutant	Vigil Hat (lower)
Megasaur	Aeon Blade, Fang
Motherbrain	Blue Mail
Mud Imp	Speed Tab
Nizbel	Third Eye
Nizbel II	Third Eye
Nu	Mop *
Panel	Speed Tab
Reptite (green)	Magma Hand, Petal
Retinite	Speed Tab (middle)
Ruminator	MegaElixir
Rust Tyrano	Red Mail
Son of Sun	Black Mail (core)
Super Slash	Slasher2 (2nd battle)
Synchrite	GoldErng, HyperEther
Terra Mutant	Muscle Ring (upper)
Terra Mutant	Power Seal (lower)
Tubster **	Power Tab, Elixir
Winged Ape	Ruby Vest
Yakra XIII	White Mail, MegaElixir
Zeal (1)	MegaElixir x 2
Zeal (2)	MegaElixir (head)
Zeal (2)	Prism Dress (left)
Zeal (2)	Prism Helm (right)

* An odd weapon for Crono...
** After beating the Tubster in the Black Omen, return to the room with two Nu and the Tubster will regenerate. Infinite Power Tabs potential.

EXCITABLE VIEWPOINT
PLAYBACK

Render our postbag full of the joys of spring, by writing to us at *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Got it?

'GASPING FOR BREATH'

I wrote a while ago asking if you could assure me that the future of *Super Play* was safe. My request was obviously dismissed as ridiculous, since it went ignored.

I have learnt today, however, that another Future publication (*Ultimate Future Games*) is being axed. Surely, if Future can so easily drop a magazine covering the latest popular hardware, one which covers a platform gasping for breath and another which won't be released until the end of '96 in the UK (if we're lucky) must already have its head in the noose?

Don't get me wrong, *Super Play* is the ONLY mag I really look forward to reading every month, and would be sadly missed.

So come on, is it going to hang in there? After all, some of us are still clinging on to the trusty old SNES until the N64 comes along, and we need something to read.

Steve Hargreaves, on the internet somewhere

We've printed this letter as there appear to be some rather evil rumours flitting about that *Super Play* is for the chop. Not so, ye of little faith. It's true, yes, that *Super Play* will be refocusing a bit. With the approach of the Nintendo 64, it's true that *Super Play* may be slightly different to the one you remember, but only in that we are moving with the times. This doesn't mean either that we're going to turn our back on the SNES – we've always supported it, and, as long as there's news to bring you, we'll be doing so. *Super Play* has a faithful following of avid readers – and we're sure that our carefully crafted magazine will be well placed to cover the future of Nintendo video gaming when interest in the Nintendo 64 surges as the release date draws ever closer. It's now only just over two months off in Japan, remember.

'PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE'

Could you please, please, please tell what the little thing on the

'THE MIND IS A MUSCLE'

Your magazine stands out among all others as a good example of informative, entertaining journalism *(Couldn't have put it better meself – Ed)*. It basically comes down to the fact that I can read through without being bombarded with teen-speak. (Totally rad! Monster!! etc.)

Edge also excels in this area, but overall is about as interesting to read as a dictionary, all well and good for those extra-mature gamers who like a surplus of fact over larfs. So, we are left with *Super Play*: fact, fantasy, variety and a good chuckle every page or so.

I have to admit that the apparent symbiosis between anime, manga and console games completely escaped me until I started reading your fine publication, even prompting me to look towards getting a few of the more significant titles for myself. It is this extra area of interest that sets *Super Play* apart.

On a different note, look at the wealth of (mainly SNES) games which give us a peek into Japanese culture. Now be honest, who among us knew what a tanuki was ten years ago? These days, if a guy in red pyjamas shouts "sho-ryu-ken" at you in the high street, you'd know to get well out the way. A game like *Legend of the Mystical Ninja* is crammed full of Jap culture both old and new, trivial and pivotal. The same game has some of the most evocative music I've ever heard on any video game as well. Some youngsters are even prompted into taking up learning Japanese...

All of this punctures that tired old argument about the evil influence of computer games on today's kids. For a start, surely there is less harm in kids interacting with what is going on in front of their eyes, rather than vegetating in front of trashy TV. The mind is like a muscle – if you stretch it, it will develop. Apart from gaining fine, hand-eye co-ordination, what of puzzle-solving, logic problems, or even (in the case of *Sim City* or *Theme Park*) managing a budget. Many games can be educational without being like the stilted edutainment titles of yesteryear. But what of games like *Super Smash TV* or *Doom*? Well, as they say, all work and no play...

Of course, it can be counter-productive if gaming takes up a disproportionate amount of time at the expense of other activities, but this is no different from the debate over a glass of red wine a day being beneficial and three crates a week not.

The computer game is not an instrument of Satan, and Nintendo especially do not name their domestic machine a FAMIly CONsole for nothing. It's time for our moral guardians to reconsider their stance on video games.

Gerry Spencer, Helston, Cornwall

Sheeks. Who rattled your cage? We do wonder what set you off on this one. Well, in any case, it's certainly a well argued case for the educational value of video games, and one of the only letters we received this month which isn't obsessed with Nintendo's delay tactics, so we've put you in a pretty box all of your own. (What greater accolade could one ask for?)

There are indeed many lessons that can be learned from video games, some of which can be gleaned from our feature this month. From impressing girls to cookery to gardening, all this and more can be perfected merely by playing the appropriate video game. Turn to page 28 to find out how you can become a better person...

***Theme Park* and *Legend of the Mystical Ninja* in video games have educational value shock!**

KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE

Q What do you call a murderer hiding in a bin?
A Killer in-stink!
Ming Wah Wong, Leeds
2/10
Destined for the bin, we think...

Q A man and a woman are stuck in a pit – who gets out first?
A The woman – she had a ladder in her tights.
Kevin Boyle. Glasgow
4/10
Ooh, almost raised a smile there. You'd get more laughs on the Les Dennis Show, frankly.

Get 5/10 or above for your joke and win something spesh! Kindly Leave The Stage, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

PS. Sorry, *Super Play*, best games mag ever, but I guess this means goodbye to you too – ta for everything.
Rob Foss, from the fax machine
Oops, there goes another one. Erm, we only have one thing to say to you, and that's everything comes to he who waits. Our grannies told us that.

スーパープレイ

That mysteries of that bit of text on our cover revealed!

cover of *Super Play* stands for. Thank you.
David O'Brien, Hackney
If you mean the little bit of Japanese text in the corner, if we sound it out phonetically it says: suh pah pu rei. It's written in Katakana – a separate set of characters which the Japanese use for writing out Western words. It's often used for game titles in Japan, as they think it's rather chic to give games English sounding titles, even if they do sound a little silly to us.

'NINTENDO HAVE FORSAKEN US'

Er... excuse me, hello, is it me or have Nintendo completely stuffed up their chances of winning the next generation console war in Europe? What stupidness – do they think that people who have the cash are going to wait another six months for their precious machine?

This latest delay can only mean that Nintendo 64 sales will fall and Nintendo will put Europe even lower on their priority list, so we'll lose out.

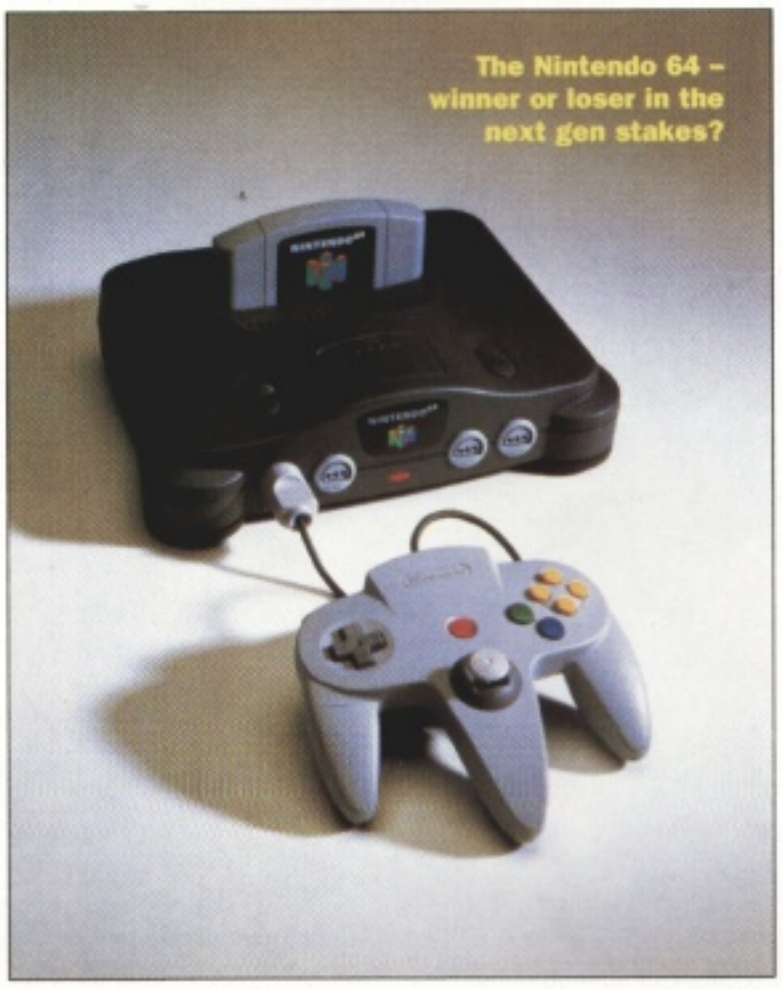
Unfortunately the truth is, Nintendo have forsaken us in the past, they're forsaking us now and they'll forsake us again in the future. Is it worth the wait? Plainly, no, not really...
Robert Andall, Ealing, London
A real hot potato this one. Our postbag is heaving with such laments this month. Let's hear from the opposition with Mr Andall's point of view...

'THE KNOW-HOW'

I'm 100% behind Nintendo.

Whenever I discuss the subject of super consoles with friends, the most commonly asked question is: "How can you be bothered to wait for the N64?" The reason I don't want to rush out and buy a Playstation or Saturn is the same reason Nintendo don't want to rush the release of the N64 and see it fall short of the competition. I own a SNES, you see, and I still believe that it's the best console to own. I only need to refer to you 100 best games feature in issue 42 to back up my claim. 100+ classic games available and more on the way means that there's enough life left in the little grey box to keep the most dedicated game fan happy until he or she can get their hands on the N64 (and Nintendo, I'm sure, are fully aware of this). The SNES is the 16-bit king and the N64 will undoubtedly be king of the next gen consoles. Nintendo have the experience and the know-how to get things right.
Steven Collins, Basildon, Essex
Yeah, maybe you hit the nail on the head there, however, only time will tell. We hope and expect that the Nintendo 64 will be worth the wait. It would indeed be one of the biggest scandals since BSE if Nintendo were to disappoint their fans.

We've said it before and we'll say it again – Nintendo are not out deliberately to piss off the public. Of that we're sure. These things happen – over-optimistic forecasting has been the reason for the disappointing delay. These things happen in the land of big business. Sigh...


The Nintendo 64 – winner or loser in the next gen stakes?

'THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES'

Square off to Sony... N64 back to god knows when... Sorry, Shigs and co, but the time has come to say bye-bye.

Thanks for the memories, but I can't cope any more. Can't bring myself to buy Sega – guess it'll have to be a 'station.

'WHY'

Why is it that, when video games are on TV, what is happening on the screen bears no relation to the players' control movements? These are usually random as shown recently when they were playing *Doom* on ER.
William McConnell, Belfast
Why indeed.

'TOO MUCH HYPE'

Nintendo chairman Howard Lincoln said, "We're not in the business of disappointing people," and he continued, "I don't want to work for somebody that forces me to do something that I'm not comfortable with."

In my opinion this Mr Lincoln should put himself in the shoes of us Nintendo users, instead of thinking about his own needs and wants. We are already being forced to wait and are disappointed by this wait, so already both of the above statements are worthless.

I also think there is too much hype surrounding the software for the N64. The machine is 64bits which makes for better colours and more gameplay, but the graphics I'm not so sure about. Take *Street Fighter Alpha*, for instance – the Playstation version is arcade perfect, and I can't see how it's going to look better on the N64.

After this 10 month wait, what are Nintendo playing at? I can understand that they are unable to release the N64 simultaneously all over the world, but why get us all excited for no apparent reason. I'm afraid lame excuses are not good enough.

***Street Fighter Alpha* – arcade perfection – who could ask for more.**

HIGHLIGHTS

"Dear newsagent, please reserve/deliver me* my copy of *Super Play* for/to me every month. Cheers!"
Elias Kayal, London
Super Play is not a newsagent. You want WH Smiths, mate.

"Pledge your allegiance to the big N, change your name to Shigeru, start taking Japanese lessons and announce to everyone you meet. 'Long live Nintendo when the competition is dead and buried'."
Steven "Shigeru" Collins, Basildon
That would be taking things too far.

"Sometimes I final fantasise,
When the streets are cold and lonely,
And Sony burn below me,
Don't these times fill Zy's eyes,
When the streets are cold and lonely,
And Mobliz burns below me,
Are you all alone,
Or are you made of stone."
Chris Green, Royston
Er yes, quite.

"I for one will not be the only one to be tempted to bite into Sony's apple in the garden of video games."
I.R. Roberts, Ballymean
We, at *Super Play*, will not be tempted to tread in any dogturd on the pavement of video games.

Nintendo are causing more controversy with Nintendo users than Camelot did with the Lottery. Personally, I'd rather wait 10 months for a BR train – at least that would give me some sort of result.

Dave Flynn, Blackheath, London

Cuh, dear. You whinging lot. A marketing cock-up is, I believe, what the situation could be termed. Believe us, Mr Lincoln is probably as disappointed as anyone that the release of the Nintendo 64 is not entirely running to schedule. That said, Nintendo still assure us that this most recent delay will not affect the US and European launches.

Right... next month then. I want to make a plea for a cheerier postbag. What about the positive side of SNES ownership? Maybe some of you have some suggestions for other readers to get through this time of hardship and, it seems, misery. Please, no more doom and gloom!

WRITE NOW!

Send your cheery, joyful, wonder-filled and flowery letters to:

Super Play,
Future Publishing,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW.

ENVELOPE ART

Got designs on our envelope art section? Then send your efforts at perfect paintage in to Envelope Art, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

The fairy post brought us Vincent Chan's terrific *Dominion Tank Police* pencilling. Or so it says on the envelope. A prize is on its way to Whetstone.

Couldn't find the name and address on this one – but we're sure the sender has the satisfaction of seeing his work here. You know who you are.

Zelda on the run. Thanks to Philip Smart from Stoney Stanton.

Robert Flint from Wellinsborough has chosen a popular *Yoshi's Island* theme.

A very deftly painted Game Freakette – from Emmeline Dobson of Upper Shirley in Southampton.

More than 20 pages of ESSENTIAL TIPS!

SONY SEGA NINTENDO PC 3DO

GAMES MASTER

ISSUE 42

MURDER! DEATH! KILL!

The Next Big Thing from the creators of Earthworm Jim

NINTENDO 64
First pics of Turok: Dinosaur Hunter!

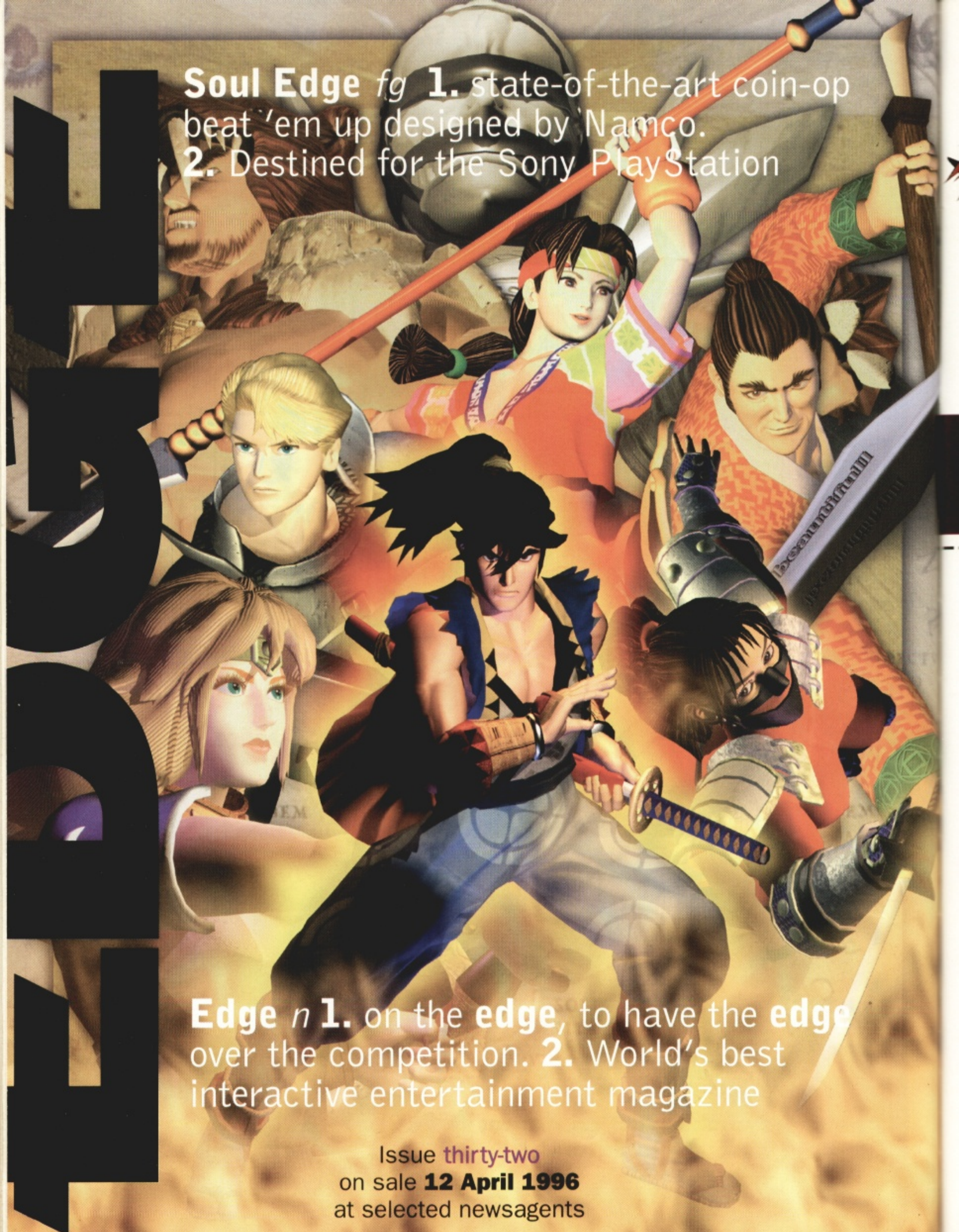
HE'S A BIT OF AN ANIMAL!

Behind the scenes of the hot Peperami game heading for the PSX, Saturn and PC...

REVIEWED!
WIPEOUT SATURN
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER PLAYSTATION
LARA '96 MEGA DRIVE

PLUS!
YOSHI'S ISLAND
We show you how to finish the final two worlds!
PANZER DRAGOON 2
Scorching action returns to the Saturn!

ON SALE NOW!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FREE ADS

SUPER MARKET

If you're interested in tracking down some further top SNES related bargains, check out our feature on page 24...

HARDWARE FOR SALE

● Neo Geo CD Boxed + Scart 2 joysticks and 2 games. Ask for Baptiste. Tel 0171 258 0612

● UK SNES £35, SMK £15, SMA £15, SFII £10, WC94 £15, MKII £15, MKIII £25, DKC 2 £30. All for £150 ONO. Tel Daniel 01225 316396

● SNES for sale 9 games and Action Replay 1.2 pads good condition for just £250 ono. Tel 01873 855765

● SNES with 5 games and Super Gameboy complete with 3 controllers and joystick. Mario Paint. All together £170 ono or games £10 each. Gareth Tel Belfast 839549

● Normal NES with 5 games Tom and Jerry, Mario and Yoshi, Mario Bros 1 Mario Bros 2 and Bart vs the Space Mutant all with book. Tel 0171 700 7150

● SNES games: Mystic Quest £20, Alien 3 £20. Tel. 01993 832090 Ask for James.

● I will sell my SNES with 8 games including Yoshi's Island, Mario Paint Earthworm Jim and Fifa 96, 2 control pads for £150 ono. Tel: 01257 264341

● UK Sega Saturn plus 2 joypads and Sega Rally. Perfect condition. Boxed as new £250 ono Tel: 01292 315349

● US Scart PSX, full speed, full screen, 1 pad, 1 mem card, 10 games inc SF2 Alpha, Tekken, Wipeout, Ridge Racer, all boxed, good condition £500 ono. Tel: 019232 85766

● SNES for sale, 4 pads + Multitap, 12 games (Killer Instinct, Doom, Yoshi's Island, NBA JAM TE, Street Racer, Mario Kart, Stunt Race FX. Starwing, Smash Tennis, all boxed + leads (1year old). Buyer collects,vgc, £300. Tel 01733 325535

● Game boy with 30+ games (inc DK 94 AND MK2) Action Replay, Game Genie, Hulster, carry case, mags, no GB box, but most carts boxed £100 ono may split. Tel Steve 01509 504152

● DKC2 (UK mint cond) £25, SFII (UK no box, full instructions) £10, Final Fight, Axelay (JAP boxed, instructions) £15 each. Offers considered. Tel Steve 01509 504152

● SUPER NES, Scart lead, Multitap, 4 pads, 18 good games. All Pal, no imports. £270 or swap for Saturn or Playstation. Tel 01892 548157

● SNES 18 games, 3 controls, pads Action Replay and converter. All boxed and instructions. £550 no offers. Tel 01354 587032

● Neo Geo cartridge machine Pal or Scart with 5 games, £300 no offers. Call Fiz 01203 224379

● Neo Geo CD scart with top Hunter Pulstar Game £250 no offers 01203 224379

● USA SNES Chrono Trigger, Evermore, Final Fantasy III, Killer Instinct, the best SNES deal you'll ever get! Tel Fiz 01203 224379

● US SNES with 15 games including DKC 1 and 2 FFIII, Secret of Evermore, Brain Lord, Illusion of Gaia, converter and more - £195. Tel 0113 2796089

● UK SNES games £15 each or will swap MK2, SFII Turbo, Starwing and F-Zero + Total issues 10, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25 £5 each and 1993 special £15. Ask for John 0121 744 1015

● SNES 26 top titles, DKC, Killer Instinct, SF2 Turbo, Super Metroid, Indiana Jones, Chopfighter III, 2 pads + joystick, S/Scope, converter, worth over £1500, sell for £250 ono. Tel 01296 613395

● Mega Drive, 10 games plus SG Pro Pad, plus Action Replay, all boxed and excellent condition, all include instructions, games include PGA European Tour, PGA Gold I and II, Phantasy Star II and III, Sonic, plus more. £160. Tel 01923 467730

SOFTWARE FOR SALE

● Chrono Trigger (US) for sale £55 ono. Boxed and mint condition. Phone Dee 0181 856 5838 (eves)

● For sale: KI (£35), Earthworm Jim 2 (£30), Mario World 2 (£35) and a game commander joypad (£12) for the SNES, in good condition and UK. Tel 01202 431441

● CVG 75 issues dating back from 1988 £55, ACE 3-55 (Complete), 30 NMS 2-37 (apart from 3, 4, 29) £40, Mean Machines 2-23 (apart from 9) £40, Gamesmaster 2-29 (apart from 3, 5, 6, 28) £40, Superplay 2-4, 6-12, 23-37 £35 Edge 2-28 (complete) £50, Total 2-17 and 10 issues after £35, 50 other mags, multi-format or Nintendo £50/ 1st issues negotiable. Buyer bloody well collects. Essex area. Tel 01787 227525

● SNES games (UK) DKC £20, Earthworm Jim £30, Lethal Enforcers £40, Yoshi's Safari £15, Killer Instinct £25. The Lot £120. All boxed. Danny Tel 01749 830245

● SNES games: Super Metroid £15, Chrono Trigger (US) £35, SOM (US) £20, Super Star Wars £15, Super Empire Strikes Back (US) £25, Dragon £15, Cool Spot (no instructions) £10, Final Fight II (FAM) £15, Castlevania (FAM) £15. Write Mal, 146 The Beeches, Cruddas Park, Newcastle U-Tyne. I'll phone you.

● UK SNES games for sale, Castlevania IV £9, MegaMan X, Mortal Kombat £10, Super Punch Out £11, All in v. good condition, others available also. Tel 01733 390520

● Super Play magazines complete set Issues 1-42 All v.g.c. £20. Tel 01892 548157

● Do you want the latest titles? Cheap new and used games for sale. For a list tel 01279 843125

● SNES games: Starwing £15, Mariokart £20, Streetfighter II £13, Ultra Man £10, Krusty's Super Fun House £15 Tel 016487 61683

● UK SNES games for sale, Zelda 3 £15 and Flashback £10, Earthworm Jim £15 Turtles in Time £12, or swap for Yoshi's Island or King Arthur's World. Tel 01252 836102

● Major cheap prices: £5 for Super Soccer, Cybernator, Super Mario Allstars, Mystic Quest, Drakken, Zombies, SFII, Stunt Race FX (US) Dungeon Master (US) £20. Universal Adaptor £5, Zelda (GB) £8. Plus also a few Manga posters and anime titles Call by 20th this month please. Joe. Also magazines (computer) many rare ones and books value at £250 + sell £45 Tel 0181 4626838

● For sale first 3 issues of Go + 1st issue of NMS. Good condition open to sensible offers - please contact Richard Farnfield, 63 Albemarle Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN2A 0HJ

● Secret of Evermore (US) in excellent condition £40 Tel 01273 766344

FANZINES

● Role Call, The Ultimate Nintendo/Sega, RPG Fanzine. Issues 1-5 now out, no.6 imminent. Still signing up writers and artists. £1.20 per issue, £7 6 issue, sub or send SAE for free leaflet. Full-sized fanzine, free to all contributors of work.

● Journey's End: The RPG fanzine for all consoles. 5 issues out now. £1.50 per issue for £5 for 4 issues. Ann Simpson, 230 Thornbridge

Avenue, Great Barr, Birmingham B42 2AL. Tel: (02) 6047524

MESSAGES AND EVENTS

● Penpal wanted from anywhere in the world, any sex, 13+, must like sci-fi & Manga, photo if possible. Write to James O'Neill 425 Pegasus Court, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 5JP

● 20 issues of Edge Magazine for sale from issue 1-31 including issue 1, will not separate. Only £30. Call Simon on 01247 810051

● Hi, my name is Jonathan and I am looking for a female penpal, between 15-17. I like music, videos and SNES. Jonathan Wright, 49 Kings Meadows, Sowerby Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 1PB

● Brandon Phillips! Stop crying about being a crap games player. It's not your fault, it comes natural for you. From the anonymous person you know is the best at everything.

● Anime and Manga titles for sale or swap. I have over 200 titles. Does anybody have any Dragonball Z, Ranma 1/2, and Streetfighter 2. For details phone Justin on 0181 422 8863

SWAPS

● I will swap my Pro Action Reply for your WWF Raw. Ask for James must be UK. Tel 01449 677263

● I will swap SFII or NHLPA 93 for any game really. Ask for Ratim at 0181 336 1822 after 6pm

● Check these titles: Hulk, Superman, Spiderman/XMen, Batman Returns, Will swap any 2 for Mega Man x2, or Megaman 7. Also, my Alien 3 for Judge Dredd, IoT for FFII or Soul Blazer. Super Parodius for Axelay write to Mal at 146 The Beeches, Cruddas Park, Newcastle u-Tyne NE4 7HD. I'll phone you.

● Swap International Superstars Soccer (boxed) for Killer Instinct or Super Streetfighter 2. Tel 0161 286 2802

● Swap Starwing, Mario Allstars, Sim City or Street Racer for any decent RPG. Any 2 for a 90% +RPG) All with instructions, no box. Tel 0171 794 6235

● Will swap UK SNES games Pushover, Prince of Persia, Jimmy Connors, Sensible Soccer, and Zelda III for Worms, Micro Machines 2, Primal Rage, Killer Instinct and ISSD. Tel 01252 716923 Farnham area.

● Exchange my SNES games including Doom, Earthworm Jim, and Donkey Kong Country for your Playstation games such as Discworld, Tekken, Toshinden, Actua Soccer and Destruction Derby will swap 2 for 1. Ask for Chris. 01536 762175

● I will swap my Megaman 3 (UK) box and booklet for your Monster Max, Mystic Quest or Tiny Toons 2 All have to be UK only. Tel 01734 475641

● Swaps! Stunt Race for Joe & Mac, Fifa, Super Wrestle Mania, Alien 3 and Starwing. All UK except Joe and Mac (US). Swap 1 for 1 with any decent games or any 3 for Yoshi's Island. Phone Danny on 01932 565631

● Will swap Mortal Kombat 3 for SNES boxed and manual, good condition for your Mechwarrior 3050 or Bomber Man 3 or Street Racer. Tel 0181 788 6275 after 4pm weekdays. Philip.

● Swap my UK Fifa, Bart's Nightmare, Wayne's World, NM Indy Car, SFII Turbo, Zombies or Bubsy for your UK ISS Deluxe, SSFII, EJ (1 or 2) or any good game. Tel: 0181 245 9585 after 5.30pm

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● SNES games exchange: good selection, top titles, send list of your games to 81 Stamford Avenue, Springfield, Milton Keynes, MK6 3LD. Tel 01908 240251

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● Desperately wanted! Super Mario Kart (UK) SNES in good condition boxed + instructions. Will pay up to £15. Ask for Lauren or leave your no. on 01636814366

● Rare Jap "Demo Demo" CDs wanted for the Playstation. Please call asap. Tel 0113 2781851 Ask for Phil

● Wanted any broken and unwanted Super NES Joypads (will pay). Phone Dee 0181 856 5838 (eves)

● Virtual Boy + games, good money waiting. Phone Jones 01379 586207

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● I would like a US SNES with PAL booster and FFIII, FFIV and Chrono Trigger all US. James 01793 751296

● Final Fantasy III (US) FFII, Evermore, Chrono Trigger, Earthbound or Soulblazer, other US games considered, must be boxed etc, convertor. Tel 01203 257683

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Anime Projects — PG

100 minutes (subtitled) RRP: £12.99

Volume 8 of this tremendously funny series opens with a dramatic camera sweep along night streets to a teetering chimney where Count Dracula squats primly brushing his teeth. What class.

In *What A Dracula* the count is a likeable goon incapable of speaking without falling off a roof or his coffin exploding. Failing to suck Lum's blood due to speaking and falling off a roof, he orders his transsexual bat sidekick to enlist help and find a date. Enter Ataru – ace playboy. ("Remember me? We met on the beach last year!") Much fun, although the punchline is feeble. Far beefier is Lum's Boy's Education Lecture Course, where Lum jumps into a cup of time tea to curb Ataru's lechery by craftily nailing a doll to his seven-year-old head that will electrocute him, should he approach another girl. Except the present-day Ataru follows with thwarting intent. An attempt to explain the plot collapses with everyone looking baffled then poking younger Ataru until he cries.

From The Gardenia With Love, the most energetic episode, is another Jariten/Ataru playoff. They incompetently nurture the gardenia to impress a florist who coquettishly beats Ataru's stupid face. Highlights are a 4,000 mph foot chase, terrific daydreams (Ataru hopes the girl will faint dispiritedly into his arms; Ten seeks an offer of marriage) and an enriching lesson in the power limit of noodles. Episode four, *A Beautiful Girl Comes With The Rain*, is a deliberately Alfred Hitchcock Presents-type tale of rain monster curses. Only Ataru and his impossible persistence while being smashed over the head with tons of water can help. (English class: "It's rai-ai-ai-ainy today.")

Again I am convulsed with laughter by this imaginatively brain-fevered show, although if you're new to the series I'd recommend the marginally stronger Volume 7. Number nine, roll up swiftly.

Jonathan Nash

8 out of 10

GHOST IN THE SHELL

Manga Video — 15

79 minutes (dubbed) RRP: £15.99

Such is the event of *Ghost In The Shell*'s home video release (on the 13th of May, incidently) that we thought we'd run our original review again for those who missed it. The only change from the Japanese original (apart from the dubbing into English) is the addition of a music track by U2 and Brian (top ambience) Eno. Don't worry, though, it neither adds nor takes anything away from the film.

Set in 2029, a super hacker known as The Puppet Master is suspected of a variety of cyber-crimes. When the elite Section 9 from the Internal Bureau of Investigations is brought in on the case the trail leads to the government's own Section 6 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs – and the revelation that The Puppet Master isn't a real person at all but an artificial intelligence otherwise know as Project 2501 which has been created specifically for political espionage. The problem now is that how do you catch a criminal that isn't really there? The vast network of computers that make up the information highway mean that The Puppet Master could be anywhere at any time, and, now that it's become 'self aware', not even its creators have any control over it.

That might be the story in a nutshell, but director Mamouru Oshil's usual predilection for brooding reflection and analysis opens the idea of a borderless virtual future far wider than might be expected. *Ghost*'s heroine (of sorts) Motoko Kusanagi has some serious thinking to do as her and The Puppet Master's lives become more and more intertwined, and she spends most of that time thinking on the screen. Like Oshil's earlier *Patlabor* films, ideas and concepts take pride of place over speed and action which may put off those expecting wall to wall *Akira*-style dramatics. That's not to say that *Ghost In The Shell* doesn't have its moments, but it is an adult movie and doesn't make any Hollywood-style concessions to people who want to go to the flicks and just turn off. Unlike most of the currently popular American Net-related movies you *will* have to think during *Ghost* and probably watch it a couple of times before you completely understand it from top to bottom.

You'll probably hear elsewhere that the animation is not up to *Akira* standards but that's generally because there isn't as much opportunity in *Ghost* to show off as there was with *Akira*'s bike chases and Tetsuo's transformation. This is still top quality and also makes (for the first time, to my knowledge) excellent use of computer animation.

To sum up then, *Ghost In The Shell* is a superior anime. It's faithful to Shirow's original without being merely an animated copy (the character designs and artwork don't ape Shirow's style at all) and is immediately recognisable as a Mamoru Oshil film. If you really hated the *Patlabor* movies with a vengeance then chances are you'll find this a little hard going, but for everyone else who's prepared to put in a bit of effort I can only recommend it.

Wil Overton

8 out of 10

IP NEWSLINE

A new vision hits the UK

While we may, unfortunately, lament the passing of two of the UK's anime distributors – Western Connection and East2West – their unfeasibly styled atomic boots are soon to be amply filled by a newcomer from across the atlantic – AD Vision – going under the entirely sensibly monickered AD Vision UK.

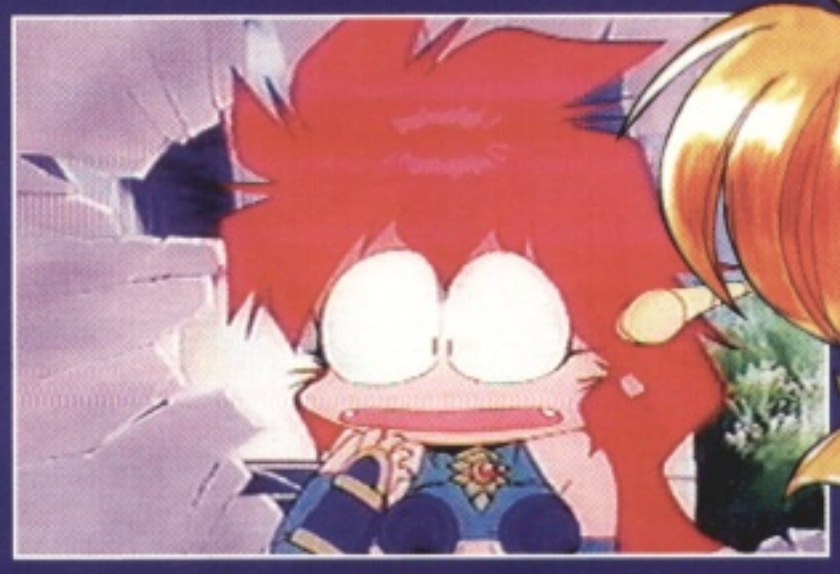
Beginning in June, they have a more than competent line up ready to take Manga, Pioneer and Kiseki on at their own game. Many of AD's titles are so current that fans in Japan are still either watching them on TV or reading about them in *Newtype*.

To start with, there's *Gunsmith Cats* from creator of *Riding Bean* and *Bubblegum Crisis* designer Kenichi Sonoda. Headlined so gently in the States as 'Girls, guns and grenades' this high-action tale does actually live up to the line quite well.

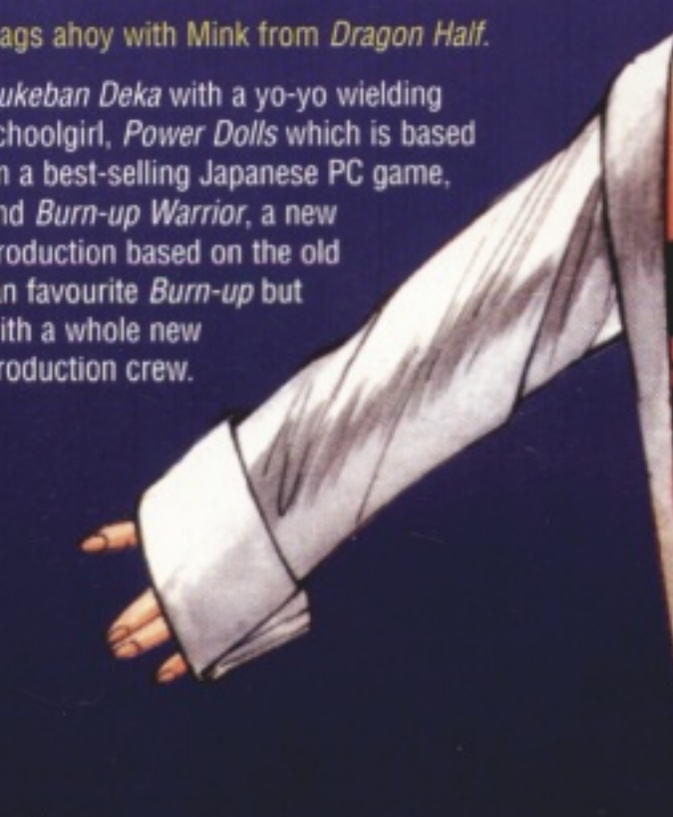
The second of AD Vision UK's initial line-up couldn't be more different. *Dragon Half* goes for the belly laugh in its 'only in Japan' ludicrous tale of a part-reptile girl in love with a dragon slaying pop star (no really). Expect some Lum-style goofing about here.

Following AD Vision UK's policy of trying to please the diehard anime fan, as many of their titles as possible will be released in both subtitled and dubbed formats. *Gunsmith Cats* will appear this way while *Dragon Half* will be a 'for the fans only' subbed tape and we'll have reviews of them both in a month or two.

On the horizon for later in the year you can expect to see top releases like Gainax's current TV hit *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, Go Nagai's bizarre *Shuten Doji* complete with intergalactic, time-travelling trolls (!), *Super Atoragon*, *Sukeban Deka* with a yo-yo wielding schoolgirl, *Power Dolls* which is based on a best-selling Japanese PC game, and *Burn-up Warrior*, a new production based on the old fan favourite *Burn-up* but with a whole new production crew.



Gags ahoy with Mink from *Dragon Half*.



Above: *Burn-up Warrior* features character designs by *Tenchi-Muyo* artist Toshinari Yamashita.

Left: Mixing World War II with Hiroshima and a secret Japanese sub. *Super Atoragon* doesn't hang about.

Right: Top explosives expert Minne May Hopkins from *Gunsmith Cats*.

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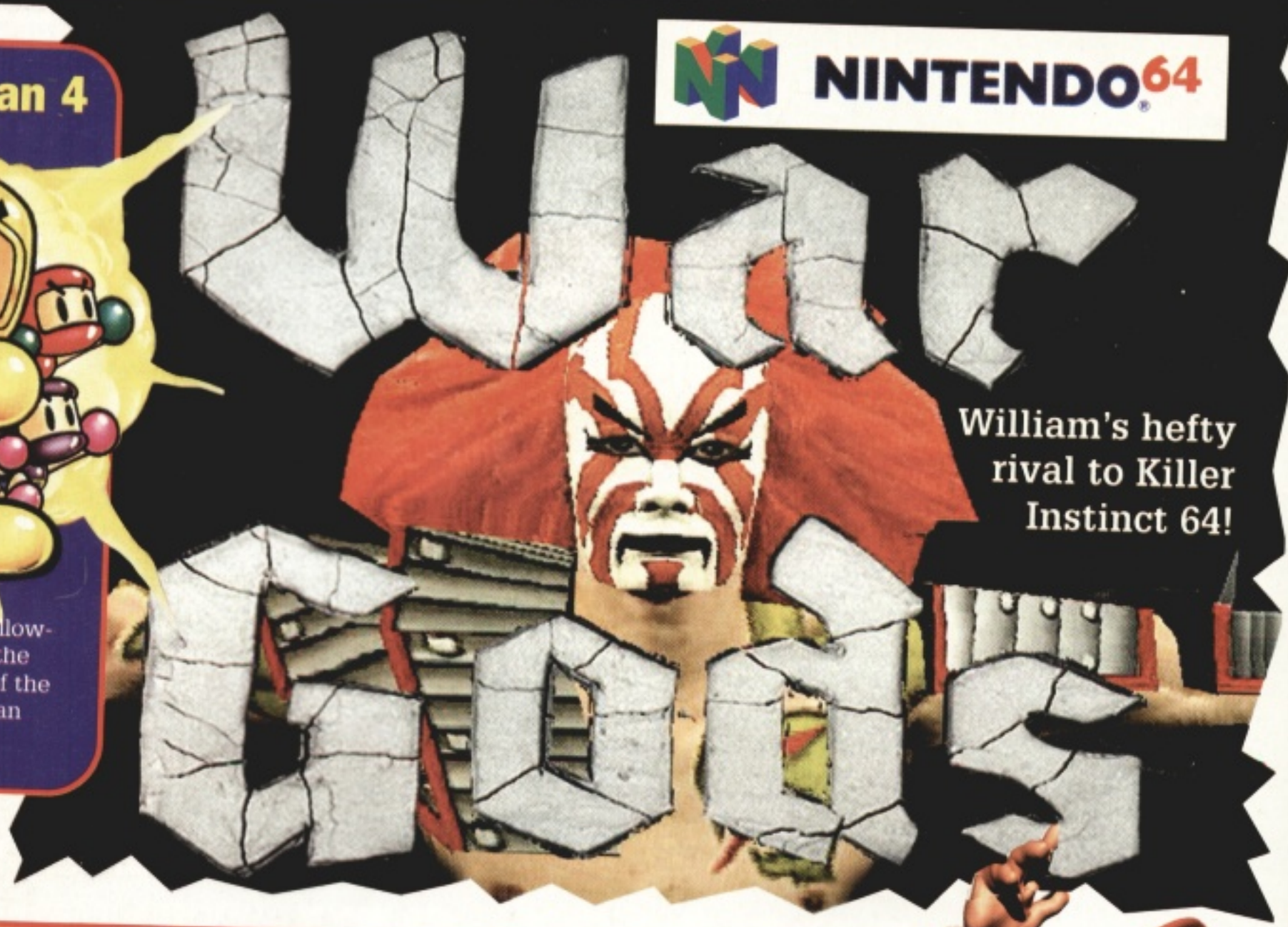

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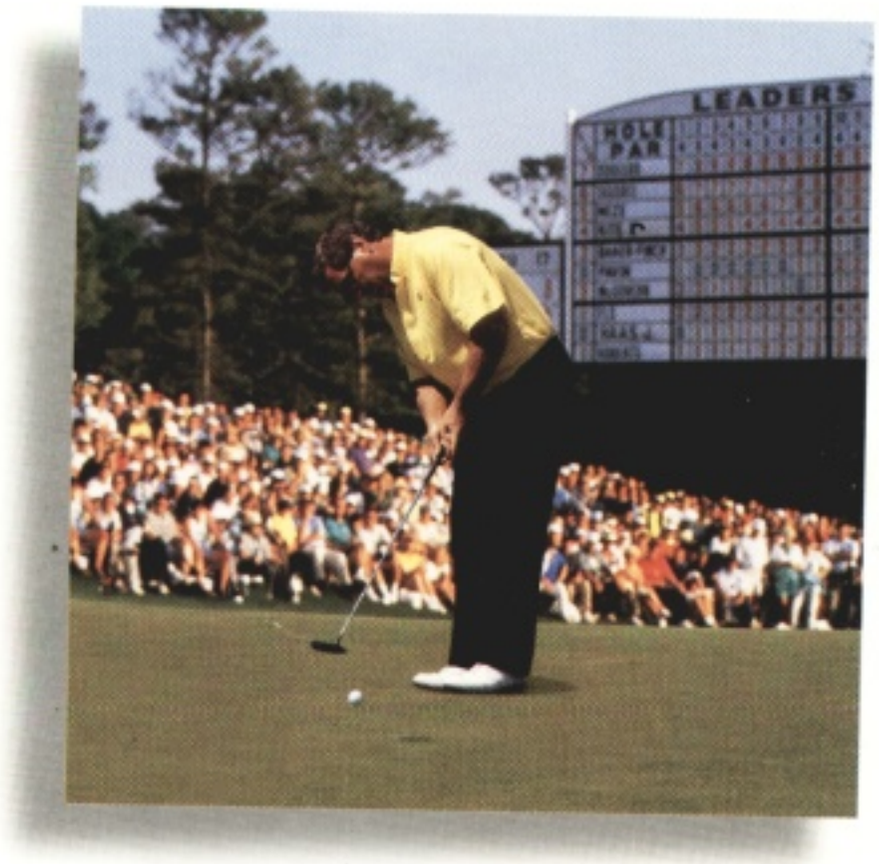

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